INTERPRETATION OF TAMIL FOLK CREATIONS

N. VANAMAMALAI

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N. VANAMAMALAI

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N. Vanamamalai

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We regret for the Errata available in the last pages which may kindly be referred to by the users.

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NOTE BY THE DLA

To enable Specialists in Linguistics to sit together, discuss and shape their thoughts, the DLA offers year after year Senior Fellowships with a stipend of Rs. 2,000 per month each and provide other facilities necessary for academic persuits for a period of twelve months. Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaran was invited to be its first Senior Fellow at S V. University, Tirupati in 1972-73. Dr. A. Velupillai of the Ceylon University was nominated as the Senior Fellow in 1972-73 at the Kerala University, Trivandrum. Prof. S. Subrahmanyan, a senior teacher and researcher has been invited to be the Senior Fellow at the Madurai University in 1974-1975. Prof. N. Vanamamalai was a Senior Fellow at the Karnatak University, Dharwar, Karnataka in 1975-1976.

The Government of Tamil Nadu due to the personal interest of the then Chief Minister Hon. M. Karunanidhi, the then Education Minister Hon. V. R. Nedunchezhiyan, the then Health Minister Hon. K. Anbazhagan and the kind and devoted Special Secretary for Education Sri C. G. Rengabhashyam made available an annual grant of Rs. 40,000 for this purpose. We are grateful to the Government of Tamil Nadu for this gesture. The regard and faith shown to the DLA are continued by the present Education Minister Hon C. Aranganayagam

We record our gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor Prof. R. C. Hiremath and Dr. J. S. Kully of the Department of Linguistics in the Institute of Kannada Studies for providing all facilities to Prof. N. Vanamamalai for his work.

We are sorry that the work has seen light of day when Prof. N. Vanamamalai is not amongst us.

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INTRODUCTION
ABOUT CONCEPTS IN FOLKLORE STUDIES

"Debates, how 'folklore' should be defined, have been waged ever since the word was coined in 1846 by William Thomas,"[1] wrote Alan Thomas in 1865. A host of participants in the great debate were the leading lights of the American folklorology: Alan Dundes, Yoder, Francis Lee Utley, William Bascom Archer Taylor, Albert B. Lord and others. Mainly the bone of contention of the ideological contest was the term 'Folk'. That does not mean that they could find unanimity in defining 'lore'.

"The twenty one concise difinitions contained in the first volume of standard-dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend reflect some of this diversity"[2]

There appears to be a consensus among folklore scholars that "lore" is the material and folks are the users of the materials. But that does not take us very far. It is a circuitous definition. The differences erupt when the question is raised, "Who are the 'folks'? " or "What are the materials?"

Let us just discuss how 'folk' is understood by a few American scholars. European scholars attribute rural background or agricultural occupation and bonds with land to the 'folks'. Even though the folks are pulled up from their native soil and are forced by circumstances to migrate to towns, they carry the traditions of their former rural culture to the towns. These traditions die hard for centuries though slowly modified by the urban tradition.

But the American scholars reject teis concept of the 'folk' as a narrow definition. This is expressed by Dundes :

"There are still some folklorists who mistakenly identify folks with peasant society or rural groups."[3] He argues that if this definition is accepted, it will follow, that city dwellers were not folks and they could not have folklore. He advances the concept, "The term 'folk' can refer to any group of people what soever, who share at least one common factor."[4] According to him the linking factor may be a common occupation, language or religion.

It is understandable that a scholar working in a highly industrialised society with a peculiar historical background of the new world could define folk, separating the folks from the rural background and peasant society. The mass of European folk emerged from peasant society and rural groups in feudal formation as industrial workers during the three centuries of industrial and social revolution. It was during these centuries that the same rural groups, pauperised by the effects of the first stage of the industrial revolution, migrated to the newly discovered "India" in search of a new life. They began their material life from scratch, clearing forests and settling there as independent farmers. They brought with them folk-cultures from several countries, Britain, Spain, Portugal, France, Netherlands, Germany. There was no machine-industry to speak of at the dawn of history of the new world. These different folk-cultures existed side, by side the linking factors being their mode of material life and religion. Their life was set in rural setting and they formed farmer communities and political states. The unity, forged in the struggle for independence, started the process of integration of different European cultures into a national American culture. The main strain of the national culture was naturally English, which absorbed other European cultures and got modified itself.

Industrialisation of urbanised America resulted in population transfers. Giant factories arose in cities sucking the rural population into them. Farms were mechanised to solve the problem of shortage of labour. Thus "the peasant societies and rural back-

ground" was unnecessary for the folks of America. In 1973, five per cent of the population were engaged in farming. Workers, both of blue collar and white collar in cities, predominated in the population of the U. S. A.

The Americans began their history without a feudal society, with peasants as the working force to produce surplus to the barons and kings for their luxurious life. Hence their folks are not peasants or rural groups. The definition containing the attributes, rural background and peasant community so much contested by American folklore scholars is really too narrow in the American context.

The dominance of industrial and financial monopolies, who own the means of production and mass media of culture, naturally dominate the cultural trends in the country. In this situation, 'folk' cannot be defined as bearers of *rural culture* or the culture of peasant society. American scholars are yet to define folk and folk-culture or lore. They can only enumerate what they consider as the lore of the folks. It is just what anthropologists like Bascom and folklore scholars like Dundes have done. Their catalogue of folklore ie becoming more and more lengthy with the passage of years. Dundes gives a partial list of the 'lore'.[5] He divides them into major lore forms and minor. Myth and folk-tale belong to the major types. Other types include legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, faiths, insults, retorts, taunts, teasings, tongue-twisters. It also includes costumes, folk-dance, drama, folk-songs, folk-medicine, folkmetaphors, bouncing rhyme, jumprope rhymes, dandling rhymes, counting out rhymes, nursery rhymes, finger and toe rhymes, folk-recipes, quilt and embriodery signs, house, barn and fence types, street vendor's cries, conventional sounds and signs to call animals, pneumonic writings and pictures.

The list betrays an emphasis on the lore, as it is expressed in speech and customs of the folks. The fundamental binding factor of similar socio-economic life and similarity of cultural superstructure of individuals forming class-groups is neglected. Hence he suggests that the common factor may be religion or a language or a common profession. Individuals belonging to the same religion,

speaking the same language and practising the same profession may be carriers of different traditions in America breaking through the binding factors mentioned by Dundes. The mode of material life, social relations arising out of it, determines the status of an individual in a historically conditioned structure of society. There may be sub-groups among a group, similarly placed in socio-economic structure of society. Class affinities have stronger binding power than language, religion, or profession in modern, urban America. In India caste is a powerful factor, though class consciousness within the caste structure is arising trend after 1947. It is a very complex picture. But we must find our way to define the term 'folk'.

The inclusion of class differentiation in the concept of folklore arose in England and Germany in the beginning of the 19th century when "antiquarians in England and philologists in Germany began to look closely at the ways of the 'lower class' The Grimms commenced to publish influential volumes of folk narratives and interpretation of German mythology." The word used to denote this subject was 'volkskunde"[6]

In the beginning of the 19th century, the German lower class consisted mainly of rural groups in peasant society in the politically divided Germany still under feudal domination. The volkskunde} was the subject devoted to cultural productions of the German peasantry. Industrialisation, domination, German monopolies and the spread of Nazism destroyed idyllic peasant life. The former peasants became workers either in factories or in agricultural industry. Scholars lament that they no more produce folklore. It is true they do not give expression to their thoughts and emotions in the old way, but in a new way in a more refined and more artistic manner. Folk-literature and art have not perished, but transformed into a more developed level.

Folklore in the original level, was the product of the rural groups of the peasant community in feudal socio-economic formation. In changing historical situations, it was modified by groups of the lower classes that emerged out of the peasant groups due to migration to new class-groups that emerged. The

mode of material life determined the new spiritual creations of of the new groups. A continuity with points of departure became evident in the cultural history of the "lower class".

Tremendous growth of productive forces, under conditions of scientific technological revolution, has changed the social relations in the capitalist structure in America. Literacy, and technical education spread and the population of workers and technicians increased in huge proportions. The old folk-life of peasant communities became a thing of the past. But the folk-traditions especially in the major fields of folk-literature or their influence over national literary creation have not disappeared.

No state or economic class can neglect folklore or refrain from making use of it for ideological and political purposes. However much the elite classes raise a hue and cry against the use of folklore for ideological purposes, they could not prevent the ruling classes in capitalist countries, socialist countries and developing countries from utilising folklore for advancing their own political interests. Science in the modern context cannot be walled against technology. Hence it is not possible to prevent folklore from being used in the interests of classes. Since folklore has abundant ideological potentialities, it has always been used as ideal weapons in the struggle between classes and nations.

Richard Dorson points out the use of folklore for political purpose by the Nazi and the Communist States.

"The first national state to make political capital of folklore studies was the National Sociolist Government of Hitler. During 1930, massive literature of folklore was published in Germany, documenting the Nazi concept of 'Herrenvolk '... ... ...'

The Nazis appreciated Riehl's recommendation that folklore and social sciences are generally on things German, and applied this knowledge to political use."

"Soviet Russia has perceived in folklore a powerful force to advance communism."

"There seems almost an inevitable logic that Soviet policy makers should have concentrated upon folklore. Substitute 'the

people' for the folk; an equation is readily made, since the Russian word 'Narod' used for both, emphasises the class conflict readily available in heroic legends and songs of the daring outlaw, who outwits the greedy landlord, begoted priest, Tsarist soldier, grasping mill owner. And the case for a people's folklore is launched."

Sokolov, the Soviet folklore scholar, states the principles governing the study in a dramatic manner.

"1) Folklore is an echo of the past; at the same time it is also the vigorous voice of the present.

2) Folklore has been and continues to be a reflection and a weapon of class conflict."[8]

Then Dorson concludes saying,

" In other words, folklore was to take its place alongside literature, music and the arts as a controlled expression of proletarian ideals. " Prejudices apart, Dorson is of the view that folklore as a science should not be used for any purpose other than accumulation of knowledge. But he forgets that knowledge by and large is purposive. Even highly theoretical knowledge finds optimum conditions of the technological advancement for its application at a later time. Scientists cannot disclaim responsibility, when theory is applied to technology and produces beneficial or harmful effects. From Bohr's discovery of the structure of the atom and the energy, Oppenheimer and his associates made the atom bomb to be dropped by Pentagon strategists on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, while Kurchatov succeeded to produce 1 watt of electrical energy from a radio-active element. Are we to blame Oppenheimer and Kurchatav for having utilised Bohr's theories for their technical innovations, which had their different effects upon the people ? Science cannot be isolated from its use in the contest of scientific technological revolution, reducing the time lag between discovery of a theory and its application in technology. In the dynamic twentieth century, when the social and cultural movements on the global scale have been greatly accelerated, no science, natural or social can remain in the ivory tower. The no-man's-land between theory and practice has been narrowed down by scientific technological revolution. Therefore

scientists have to concern themselves with the effects of their discoveries and accumulation of knowledge. In the virulent battle of ideas of the last two decades, it has become more and more impossible to remain aloof from the front line of battle of ideas. Dorson has much more to say against ideological infilliation of communism into folklore studies than against ideological utilisation of folklore studies by Hitler. Pultikov and Sokolov of the Soviet Union interpret international folklore from the stand point of historical materialism. In attacking them, Dorson and others have to attack their ideology from one stand-point or other. Ideology cannot be completely absent in an ideological debate.

How is 'folk' derived then? Dorson's defintion is inadequate because the socio-economic base and the cultural superstructure of folklife are not reflected in his definition. According to Narod, the word signifying 'Folk' and the people includes both folk and near folk sections of society.

"Who are the folks in the Indian situation with historically and currently? The whole history of the Indian people has to be briefly recapitulated to answer this question. I agree with the concepts of D. D. Kosambi regarding Indian history, D. D. Kosambi concepts of Indian history are contained in his latest book the Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India". I may be permitted to quote it in full.[9]

"India is still a country of peasants, Agrarian development is extensive, though still with primitive technique. Most of the land is overgrazed and overfarmed after two thousand years of civilisation. The yield per acre is abysmally low, because the methods are primitive and holdings too small to be economic. The tight network of roads and railways that one sees in Western Europe is just lacking. This means a significant production is local and locally consumed. It is precisely this backward inefficient nature of production that has allowed so many older tribal groups to survive, albeit upon the verge of extinction. The varied topography and generally warm climate has allowed an extraordinary inner differentiation due to different local history among the peasantry."

The differentiation within the village was by caste, even beyond that between artisan and peasant or priest. When there are forests closely one may still see people like those of the Western Ghats or the Mundas and Oraon who are barely out of the food-gathering stage. They are dying out because of disease, drunkenness, the disappearance of forests the advance of civilisation and of money-lenders. They still practise witchcraft on a deadlier level than the peasants. Their primitive tribal gods have something in common with the lower village gods; often they pay homage to the village gods and the village recognises their deities too. Often a peasant-caste bears the same name as some aboriginal tribe in the same region. The two groups no longer intermarry, for the peasant has become a superior being; in fact the differences in food supply, ampler and more regular diet, change the physique and even facial index in a few generations, Nevertheless the traces of common origin remain and are admitted; sometimes by a common annual worship, particularly of mother goddesses with peculiar names not known in other villages. The peasant also worships other higher gods which look primitive enough, but go a step above the local gods. There may be a guardian of the fields, generally a cobra with a relief image which has divine status. The 'elders' are commemorated by a slab with a human couple in relief. The buffalodemon is a farmers' god, common to the whole region, though duplicated by each farmer. Other small gods have to be propitiated at ploughing, sowing, harvesting and threshing. Vetal is a cacodemon, a prince goblin, but also a god still higher than the Brahmin gods Siva, Vishnu, Rama and Krishna and their consort goddesses. Sometimes the primitive local god or goddess is identified with one of the deities found in Brahmin literature. The older gods are not smashed, but adopted and adjusted. The process is of crucial importance in the history of India, first in developing the country from tribe to society and then holding it back, bogged down in the filthy swamp of superstition.

The difficulty in studing Indian History through village tradition is the lack of chronology. Events that happened fifty years ago and traditions formed 1500 years ago are on much the same level to the villager, because he lives from season to season. The four yogas, periodic ages of mankind that remain Indian myth, re-

flect the four major changes of season accurately. They are supposed to end with a universal deluge after which the cycle begins again. This is what happens in the countryside after every monsoon. Every year is much the same as the others, the difference being that some have good harvest and others have pestilence. Records are not kept, the peasant being entirely illiterate. Even when there had been some schooling, the way of life is such that literacy is of no use to the villager, who slowly lapses into ignorance. No books, newspapers or any such reading material penetrates the average village. Special care has thus to be used in separating the elements of a village tradition. On the other hand, it shows how very ancient observances can survive with little change of outward form to this day. Often the feudal baron or the Brahmin priest himself took over these local customs as his own, perhaps giving them a surface varnish. History 'as we have defined' is to be seen displayed in full detail in the villages of India-provided one has the vision and insight required to read that history.

This is how the author has defined history : "History is presentation in the chronological order of successive changes in the means and relations of production."

This definition has the advantage that history can be written as distinct from a series of historical episodes; culture then must be understood also in the sense of the ethnographer to describe the 'essential ways' of the whole people.

Culture is regarded as a matter of intellectual and spiritual values in the sense of religion, philosophy, legal systems, literature and other fine arts. Cultural history according to them deals only with such 'culture' and nothing else. All these forms of culture are the creations of the upper crust of the ruling class for their own entertainment and for the preservation of their privileged position in society. Partisanship in the interests of their class is found in differant systems of philosophy and their own values projected into literature.

Folks, in the feudal formation that has prevailed for many centuries in India, have always lived a life of labour producing the

wealth of society. The surplus product was appropriated by the ruling class, Brahmin and the king and their executive hierarchy. The cultural values produced by the two, the ruling class and the working people were projections of different values of life. The upper class proposed as the highest ideal of man, MOKSHA, freedom from the chains of samsara, while they could not ask the working folk to pursue the same ideal. The working folk had to produce the necessities of life so that the upper class philosophers could carry on their speculations having satisfied their material needs. This idea was expressed by Thiruvalluvar who is believed to be of folk origin."

"If the ploughman closes his fist (and refuses to work) those who declare that they have renounced desire, cannot maintain the state of renunciation."

The four great ideals of man are of course ideals dear to kings. They are high above the reach of the folks. Manu and Krishna had to preach to the Sudra to serve the Brahmin and the king with their labour. There was no higher Dharma than Kula Dharma for them, duties prescribed for the lowest varna.

Thus, the value of life prescribed for the Sudra by the ruling class was that labouring folks, are not the same as they assumed for themselves. Also, the Sudras, the labouring folks, most often created values opposed to the values of their masters and projected it in their arts and literatures. A few of them have been preserved for us in written form in ancient tales not very popular with the ruling class. Katha Sarit Sagara, Brihat Katha, Jataka tales and Panchathandra were literary adaptations of folk-tales. A few of the tales projected folk-values opposing Brahminical and Buddhistic ethical values. A tale in Katha Sarit Sagara has the following theme : The all-powerful dispenser of human desting, Brahma, who wrote the future of human beings and their craniums was tricked by a clever Brahmin. Brahma wrote on the head of a Brahmin child that he would make a living by carrying load on a buffalo and his sister would live by prostitution. The pupil of the Brahmin child's father advised him to sell the buffalo everyday so that Brahma had to bring him a buffalo everyday. The prostitute was asked to demand a measure of pearls from every customer.

when no one visited her; Brahma had to bring her a measure of pearls everyday. Thus the power of fate was frustrated by the ingenuity of a man.

Another story tells us how a poor young weaver succeeded in marrying a princess making use of her parents' faith in Vishnu. The weaver fell in love with the princess and asked his friend the carpenter to help him obtain the princess as his wife. The carpenter made him a mechanical device resembling Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu. The weaver flew over the palace wall and approached the princess. She believed him to be Vishnu and surrendered to his embraces. The king came to know of this affair. But he was happy that he was fortunate in his son-in-law. The queen who was told of her daughter's good fortune was also happy. Everything went on well till the king of a neighbouring country invaded the Vishnu Bhakta's kingdom. The king sent his wife to pray to Vishnu to help him in battle. The queen appealed to her daughter. The princess requested her god-husband to help her father in battle. The impostor was stunned. Narada the intelligence chief of heaven reported the news of the impostor to Vishnu and commented that, if he was defeated, people would cease to believe in the real Vishnu and no one would build temples and perform worship for him. God Vishnu thought for a moment. He decided to endow the impostor with his own power for the time he took part in the battle and also grant him the power over his own divine weapon.

Thus human endeavour got round the divine power Vishnu lending it to human purpose. Such stories project ethical values quite opposed to those of the Brahmin expressed in Needhi Sastras. The folk-elements in early literary tales opposed the ideas and concepts of Brahmins, Buddhist priests and kings that were designed to keep the common folk subservient to them. It is significant that the Kathas were written not in Sanskrit, but in Prakrits, the folk language of the people.

Though the ancient Indian tales are considered literary creations, they were admittedly orally transmitted till they were written down at a particular point of time by the authors by whose names they are now known. Not only tales, but in verse narratives,

heroic epics, the folks had poduced their own output quite separate from the literary puranic productions of the ruling class enlogising kings and nobles. The folk-life and folk-artistic products are very ancient, indeed the warp and woof of all literary production in every Indian language. In all ancient literatures, the earliest stratum consisted mainly of folk-elements. The tribal cultures evolved into folk-cultures from which was separated the elite culture, becoming the way of life the ruling class. The ideology and culture of the elite of an epoch tended to become the ruling ideas of an epoch. Still the folk life preserved and developed a mass culture, now separate from the elite culture, now getting modified by it to be accepted by the folks as the mass culture of a region.

The question of transmission and diffusion of folklore, especially folk-tale has been much debated. The massive motif index of Stith Thompson proposes a theory that every tale, with variants in different regions, must have a common source of origin. It must have spread like waves on the surface of water into which a stone is thrown. The Indian school led by Benfey claimed the place of origin of most tales as India. They showed these variants from tales of Katha Sarit Sagara,Panchatantra and Jataka. But their search for archetypes of Panchatantra led them nowhere. Thompson found that his motif index did not very much appjy to the Indian tales. Benfey found that, "The index of tale types found in Stith Thompson is not complete, but in more than a thousand different numbers, represents the European stock of folk-tales quite well. Very few of those, scarcely more than six, three animal fables and three jocular fables, are to be found among the ninety tales or so contained in the Panchatantra; and among those six, some have so rarely been taken down in Europe that they are evidently borrowed articles that have slipped accidently from books and cannot be said to have really taken root in European traditions."

Pointing out the view of Benfey, C.W. Von Sydow concludes that, "In Indian tradition there are likeness only to a few tales that approximately correspond to and may be identified with European types. Thus it is shown already by comparing the types of folk-tales to be found in Asia and in Europe respectively that a mass immigration of folk-tales from the east into Europe is out of question."

The similarity in a few types between Indian and European tales is due to universal human facts; and variants are due to historical and geographical differences between the two different folk-lives.

The theory of diffusion may hold good for the migration of tales, legends and myths in isolated tribal regions, where variants can be explained by means of linguistic and geographical differences, where social milien is common over a tribal area. Breaking through linguistic and geographical differences, a few types of folklore bear close similarity among tribes who are ethnographically similar. This has been brought to light by the commendable work of Thompson, Levy Strauus, and others, who concentrate on South American tribal tales and their migration.

Emeneu applied their method based on archetype variation-diffusion to Indian tales, taking one specific example, the mangoose tale. But he forgot that his instances of different versions from different language were recorded centuries ago, and retold orally again and again. Hence oral transmission and its modes cannot be *traced in the variations and an archetype cannot be reconstructed.*

Mutations are adapted generally more or less to the individual taste of the narrator and also its popularity among the passive hearers. Such variations are all of the same type, but exist in a great variety of mutational types. The most important factor of mutation is that they are intended for a definite social class. In ancient Indian tales, the hero is changed from a prince to a wealthy merchant, from a Brahmin to a Buddhist Bikshu, from a warrior to an artisan precisely because, the variants are intended for different social classes.

I shall conclude this discussion on migration and difussion of folk-tales, with the remarks of Von Sydow.

"Folk-tales must necessarily be studied not according to their types only, but above all by groups, so that the individual type is connected with the study of all types belonging to the natural group. However this makes considerably greater demands on the resources of the scholar that would suffice for the mono-

graph of the old type. Here first and last the colloboration of as great a number of scholars as possible is required. In this connection one important desideratum is a large-scale international research institute for the purpose."

Transmission of Folklore

A decade age folklorists depended entirely upon the criterion of oral transmission in defining folklore.

It is now realised by folklore scholars that over emphasis on oral transmission as a criterion in defining folklore leads to a narrow definition, so that a large and significant body of folk-creation falls outside the scope of the definition. Oral transmission has been necessitated by illiteracy of rural folks for centuries. Their only method of transmission of narratives was oral. The influence of ethnography and anthropology led to the emphasis on the study of tribal societies and their culture. Being illiterate, the mode of transmission of culture among them was oral. Hence folklore scholars influenced by the emphasis of ethnographers and anthropologists considered oral transmission of certain elements of rural culture as a fundamental criterion for defining folklore.

Even today American folklorists lean heavily upon oral transmission to define folklore. As literacy spreads, everything the folks consider worthy of preservation is being written down and set to print. It is conceded by American Folklore scholars that if an oral tradition, a tale, a song, a myth, a charm or a play in put in writing, it will not cease to be folklore. The contention here is the criterion to judge whether it is folklore or not. The mode of transmission follows the pattern :

		↗	Oral variant	Main
Oral	Written (stabilised)	Variations →	Oral variant	theme
		↘	Oral various	preserved

The stabilised version is written. From that minor innovations are made, but taking care to preserve the basic structure of the theme. Two instances to illustrate this statement may be cited here.

Many of the love songs, ballads about local heroes and local deities were originally orally transmitted. A few performers (active bearers) who acquired proficiency in grammar and prosody wrote them down. They taught their pupils and made them memorise the text from the written texts. Thus we have for every famous folk shrine, a 'pulavar' family which provides hereditary performers, who sing the ballads on the annual worship day called "Kotay" There are ballad singers hailing from particular families known as pulavar (poet) families who sing at Sorimuthu Ayyan Koil at Upper Papanasam and Muppandal near Nagercoil. Many balled singers learn the texts from pulavars belonging to families which possess a copy of the written ballad, and take pride in claiming that they learned the text from the descendant of the pulavar who had first written it down. Though innovation by individual singers is permissible, basic mutations about the main incidents in the stories of deified heroes and deities are frowned upon by the folks. Hence the preservation of the main theme, the recitation of which on a day dedicated to the deity as a religious function, is preserved by adhering to a written text or a few written texts accepted as authentic.

Texts exist for dialogues to be recited by actors in folk-plays. Song and music had a preponderent role in folk-drama in Tamil-Nadu till about half a century ago. They were written down and preserved in texts. Teachers taught young boys both songs and prose dialogues and made them to write them several times on slates. The performers were severely punished if they departed from the texts. The privilege of innovation was permitted only to experienced actors, who were also teachers. We thus find that the mode of transmission was two-fold. Active bearers, (performers, narrators) had to memorise written texts and recite orally. For the passive bearers, it was only listening and enjoying. For the training of the active bearer, written texts had an important role to play.

Another area of folklore, in which written transmission is prevalent, is sorcery and witchcraft.[12] From a symbol the Bija has developed into a cluster of words. To produce harm to a subject the witch craftsman draws a geometrical figure and a sign and recites a mantra 108 times or 1008 times or 1000008 times. Then the charm takes effect and the subject suffers pain in some part of his

body as desired by the performer. The symbol is merely a sign, the tail of Hanuman or Trisula of a deity. The mantra running to three or four lines is written and learned by heart. Sometimes it is prescribed that the performer must write the mantra a million times, so that the charm may take effect. Just as words when used in a magical or religious context are considered to have miraculous power by those who used it only for mundane purposes, so also letters are believed to have power to produce miracles ! These folk chants have developed into Sahasranama—for Siva and Sakthi— the repeti on of which is believed to bring down rain.

Oral transmission of folk-culture was due to the fact that literacy was an ability acquired only by the ruling class; this ability was their exclusive privilege and was of very little use to the rural folks. Otherwise there was no fundamental relation between folk-culture and oral transmission. Culture was a material-spritual continuance expressed in a few forms, shape, speech, letter, sign action etc. In a particular art, a particular form of expression was used more than any other. In isolated tribal societies, transmission of culture was mainly oral and through gestures. But in Indian context except in the marginal tribal sub-cultures, the rural folk culture was expressed in many forms including oral. Oral transmission still remains a method of transmission of folk culture, but not a condition for its existence.

I shall conclude this introduction by referring to three theoretical concepts of folk studies with which I am in agreement. I would plead for an integrated methodology based on a sound theory based on the movements of 'Folk life', 'Folk-mass cultural' and 'contextual' schools. The protagonists of folk-life concept desire to broaden the concern of the folk-lorist, so that they will embrace the tangible products of the folk and indeed the vitality of folk-life (Donnyoder).[13] Glassie proposes to go beyond the discussion of the history and distribution of the object and to probe into its emotional and cultural role in the life of its makers and users.[14] He has initiated an attempt to study interaction between the movement of ideas and of objects, the satisfaction of material cultures in a world of mass technology and of an American folk-life style. There is a wide scope of agreement between the 'folk-life' school and the Soviet historical materialist school, though

the minor differences between them are more prominently emphasised by the opponents of folk-life school in America.

There are a few folklore scholars who despair that the rural peasant folk-culture is being destroyed by the urban technological mass production, and soon there will be no folk-culture to study. The folk-cultural concept enables its protagonists to reinterpret the opposition between the mass and the folk-cultures as interpenetration and not as confrontation. "Ethnic and rural folks pour into the cities, adjust in varying ways to the urban temper and struggle to maintain their folk identities. The city is indeed increasingly a conglomeration of folk societies as middle classes flee towns for suburbs and the ghetto takes over." "Mass cultural orientation" says Dorson, "has not yet produced a comprehensive statement." But I would aver that it is a fastly growing trend in the study of folk-culture in America.[15]

The interest in folk-lore studies has now switched over from autiquities to contempoarenity, from prehistory to current history and geography. Certain German folklorists have renounced romantic search for anti quarian survivals and embraced the phenomena of modern life. Bausinger remarks,[16] "We no longer believe that industrialisation necessarily implies the end of a specific folk-culture, but rather we attempt to trace the modifications and mutations undergone by folk-culture by the industrialised and urbanised world."

Lastly folklore has to be studied historically and concretely. The multidisciplinary interest in folklore, of anthropology, linguistics and sociology has produced a strong pre occupation with environment where folklore text is analysed with an emphasis on theory. The young generation of folklorists, insists that the folklore concept applies not to a text, but to an event in time when a tradition is performed or communicated.[17] It is therefore important to bring all knowledge of the past, in history literature lingustics and social sciences to understand the present in which human social life is undergoing transformations at amazing velocities. A methodology, comprehensively utilising all progressive methods in social sciences, and a broad conceptual

framework of world outlook are in the making which argued well for the future studies in International folklore with better understanding and sympathy for the folks all over the world.

In the Indian situation, the mass media radio, newspapers, journals have their impact on the folk-mind. They transmit elite and literary cultural values and modify folk-values. The pace of scientific tehnological revolution being slow in comparison to developed countries, the rapidity of change of life in the rural areas is also slow. Hence the folk-culture absorbs a few elements of elite culture and develops without completely losing its folk qualities. Still the problems of national integration in the field of culture is a formidable problem. The persistence of the localised nature of folk-culture resists transmission to other linguistic areas. Thus folk-heroes of Tamil Nadu are unknown in Kerala or Karnataka and vice versa. The folk-ways of the peoples of different linguistic regions are distinct and separate. It is possible to transmit similar elements of culture through mass media and translation of texts and exchange of folk-cultural troupes of singers and dancers.

In separate linguistic areas, there are different levels of folklore according to the different levels of folk-life. The levels can be distinguished on the basis of the degree of communication between the groups that subsist on their manual labour and the elite groups who live upon their intellectual labour. The differences between the lowest level and the highest level is not merely based on the nature of labour the groups are engaged in. It is a class difference involving caste affiliation, economic disparity, opportunities for education and for absorbing elite spiritual culture. The lowest level approximates to the untouchable castes living in isolated colonies in ignorance and harnessed to a life of toil. For thousands of years they are consigned to agricultural labour subsisting under poverty line. The dividing line between the socio-economic life of the untouchable groups and tribal groups is very thin. They are at the base of the apex of the Indian civilised society, creating its material foundation, but remaining isolated from its cultural stream. The literary and artistic life of the society has no impact on them, because they are consigned to the depths of illiteracy and ignorance.

They are better than the tribal folks in having a settled life working on land, but work is alien to them, because they are alienated from the means of production. No class stratification has arisen with the caste group. The concessions of government has touched only the fringe of their enormous problems. A tiny upper crust of professionals and semiliterate self-seeking 'leaders' who exploit the cruelly exploited harijans are modern outgrowths of the years of independence. The younger generation of educated untouchables are angry and desperate, but desire to move upward to the status of the middle class individuals of other castes. They are alienated from their own caste-groups, but are not accepted by other caste-groups. The mass of the untouchable castes remain at the lowest level of folk-life and culture, to whom the fruits of elite culture have not permeated to any great extent. Their religion, customs, traditions, speech, folk-arts, folk-literature are all different from those of the elite and the middle classes. This is the basic level of folk-life.

The next higher level of folk-life is that of poor peasants, cobblers, palm-climbers whose economic status is much the same as that of untouchables, but caste ritual status, a little higher than theirs. Their communication with the other groups, better placed in economic and caste-status is more regular and frequent. They have developed a wealthy class of property-owners or trading-group among them. They are a bridge, culturally speaking, between the basic level and the higher level. Each of these groups had a renaissance or reform movement to better their conditions of life and caste status, by which the wealthier sections profited by consolidating their caste men on a communal platform. The elite of this group try to move upward in the ladder of caste hierarcy, at the same time trying to unite, with the wealthier sections of their castes to protect their own class-interests. Their interests sometimes conflict, but the elite make use of caste feelings and loyalties for their own interests.

Another level — the third is closely linked to the elite, the land-owning, wealthy classes. They are their agents, overseers and tenants. This group also desires to move up; their sympathics always remaining with the wealthy classes. They imitate their

masters, follow their religions, and image that they would become a member of the class in future. In the culture of these groups, we may find a hybird situation, but basically they represent a folk-culture with a whitewash of elite elements.

Lastly we have the highest level of social strata representing the middle sections of a national culture. But the sweep of the lower levels compel them to absorb certain popular elements to make their elite cultural movement attractive to the masses. There is interaction between the social lives of the groups in all the four levels, their cultural trends coming into contact and interacting.

Folk-culture at the lowest level has its similarities with isolated tribal cultures and also with cultures of the nearer levels of folk-culture. At this level 'Sanskritisation' is entirely absent. They learn from the next higher levels of culture, if they had a movement of renaissance. They have learned nothing from Brahminism, because contacts with Brahmins, the bearers of the elite culture is denied to them There were certain moments in history, when they were swept into religious movements of Bhakti, into trances of illusory equality with other caste-groups only to be cruelly disappointed very soon. Nandanar and Thiruppan Alvar, were rare exceptions, who did not represent a mass movement towards a "higher religion". Nandan could attain entry into the temple of Chidambaram only after purifying his impure pariah body immersing in flames. Modern education and progressive reforms and the international political trend of freedom for all oppressed people are factors that can elevate the folk-cultural life to a higher level. Sanskritisation is a reality at higher levels of folk-life where groups of such levels live in close contact with groups of Brahminic culture. There is no universal upward movement from the base to the pinnacle as is pictured by Sanskritists.

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RAIN IN FOLKLORE MAGICAL AND RELIGIOUS RITUALS FOR PRODUCING RAIN

Two types of ritual (1) Magical (2) Religious

Parts of South India depend upon river water for agriculture. Though river water is utilised as much as possible for irrigation, large tracts of land are watered by rain-fed tanks or merely by seasonal rainfall. This is why large areas of South India are at the mercy of seasonal rainfall. Even rivers swell with water only if there is seasonal rainfall. The main means of living of our rural people being agriculture, they are wholly dependent on rain for the prosperity of the crops. Though the possibility of using surface water, subterraneous water and even sea water has been brought nearer realisation by the advancement of science of hydrology, our folks are ignorant of these discoveries of science. Their beliefs and a system of knowledge based on them hinder scientific cognition of the facts and laws of science.

There are two kinds of belief about the cause of rain. They are :

1) Rain can be persuaded to come down by performing certain symbolic rites which it will imitate. This is a case of imitative magic. This belief is universal among rural communities all voer the world.

2) Rain is under the control of a particular god. He must be propitiated if he should send rain. He is concerned of as an anthropomorphic deity, who is amenable to persuasion.

J. G. Frazer had adduced innumerable instances for the belief in homeopathic magic to bring down rain.[1]

An Australian anthropologist and his wife have brought to light the magical rituals of the Central Australian aborigines.

Primitive agricultural tribes in India are no exception in respect of their belief in sympathetic magic.

Among the tribes having contacts with more developed agricultural folks, magical rites are reinforced by religion. Primitives do not hesitate to have recourse to religion, when it will answer their purpose better than other old magical rites. Mills reported the following in 1909 about Graro's an agricultural tribe of Assam.[2]

Combination of Magic and Religion:

"The rain-god is invoked in cases of long continued drought in the "Wachikuta" or "Salgurua" sacrifice. The ceremony is a curious one and worth describing. All the male-members of the village repair to a big rock in the neighbourhood, each person holding a gourd of water in his hand. The priest 'recites a prayer' to invoke the god to have mercy on them, 'sacrifices a goat and smears its blood upon a rock.' The assembled persons pour the contents of the gourds over the unfortunate priest to the accompaniment of beating of the drums and blowing of the wind-instruments "

We can easily distinguish two elements in this ritual, the magical and the religious. Prayer to the rain-god and the sacrifice of the goat are clearly beliefs in a superior force that controls rain and that prayer will influence the god. This is the religious element of the ritual. Smearing blood on a rock and pouring water on the priest are inexplicable, except by an assumption of the belief in sympathetic magic.[b]

Blood in Magical Ritual :

The role of blood poured on a rock water poured over a man or a stone are universal magic ritual practices prevalent all over the world. In Central Australia, the aborigines perform a rain-making ceremony thus :

The women keep themselves pure by observing certain taboo for three days before the ceremony begins. All the women retire to a rock over which a temporary shed is built. Each woman slashes her forearm with a knife and allow the blood to drop upon the rock. Then they return to the place of the ceremony.

Imitative Magic :

Then the old men are gathered in a shed. All the young men slash their hands with a knife and spill their blood on the old men. Then men and women throw up dungs of birds which fall and stick to the blood on the old men's bodies.

Splashing with Water :

Then pots of water are poured over the old men. The women chant a charm during all the ritual activities.

This is an instance of belief in sympathetic magic. There is no rain-god invoked in this system of rituals.

It is believed by the primitive people that blood possesses magical power over fertility. The dung of the cock represents clouds. The dung sticking to the blood is a combination of rites aimed at producing rain and fertility. Pouring water is the sign for rain to come down.

In South Indian rites for producing rain, both magical and religious rites combine into a complex synthesis. In a few cases of rituals, magic preponderates over religion and vice versa.

Symbols of Fertility and Drenching[3] :

I shall cite a few examples of rain-making rituals and prayers from available reports and recorded folk-song in support of this statement.

J. Abbort reports the following.[3] "The carrying of some symbol suggestive of rain or the fertility that comes with rain, and drenching of the bearers with water, suggestive of the fall of rain are features of ceremonies for procuring the rain observed in Kandesh, the Deccan and Karnatak. 'Befuts of' Navapur Peka make an image of earth adorned with green plantain leaves and flowers and place it on a board which an unmarried girl carries, accompanied by other women, singing songs and praying for rain. At each house she receives grain and is drenched. Boys and girls under five years of age go from house to house on four successive nights accompanied by men carrying torches which simulate lightning. The girls who are drenched at each house sing :

Dondodhya, Dondodhya, give rain

Make rice and pulse grow,

Make jawari and bonjuri grow.

Here the ritual objects are torch, earth and leaves, while magical activity is drenching. These magical rituals are strengthened by prayers to the rain-god Dondodhya. The magical objects and symbols may vary from place to place, but drenching is invariable.

Splashing Uriati :

In Tamil Nadu a ritual is performed, devoted to Krishna on a day sacred to him, Krishna Jayanti day. A pole of about 30 feet in height is erected before the Vishnu temple. The top is covered by a roof, shaped like an umbrella. From the rafters of the roof, fruits, cloth and a small bag of coins are hung by means of cord. The pole is smeared with oil. Young men climb upon it to appropriate the things hanging from the roof. From the top of buildings nearby pots of water are spalshed over the young men who attempt to climb the pole. They are drenched. But they persevere. The game goes on till one succeeds in removing the bag of coins hanging from the roof.

The success of the lad is hailed with shouts and whistles in the hope that the ritual will bring down rain."

Kumbam or Karaka Dance :

During the propitiation festival of the village goddess in Tamil Nadu, a religio-magical ritual called "Kumbam Attam" is practised. It marks the end of the festival. On the last day of the festival, which always falls just before the sowing season, the priest in whose body the spirit of the goddess is supposed to enter for the period, carries Kumbam on his head (he is a temporary god) and goes dancing along the main streets to the accompaniment of nathusuram (a kind of pipe) and drums. The Kumba is a pitcher containing germinating seeds and fermenting flour. The mouth of the pitcher is covered by a coconut, mango leaves, neem leaves and flowers. The priest called 'Komaraththadi' stops in front of every house of the worshippers of the goddess. He stands with his feet on a plank on which designs are pointed with white flour paste. All the women in the house pour water mixed with paste on the feet and legs and sometimes on the body of the priest. We see the in-vitable drenching rite in this ceremonial action. The kanians,folk-singers, believed to be sons of the goddess, sing a song beating their drums (thappu) vigorously.

> Let the good rain shower;
>
> Let the earth become fertile.
>
> Destory the drought; Let rain fall in plenty.
>
> Let the earth yield good crops,
>
> Let the hunger of our children vanish.

The significance of the Kumba has been satisfactorily explained by D. D. Kosambi as representing the womb of the mother; each and all other articles, germinating seeds, fermenting flour, leaves, coconut and neem, are fertility material to be shown to the cloud to remind it that it should now send rain. The kolam originally was a ritual Yantra representing the Yoni of mother goddess.

Frogs in Rain Rituals :

Frogs begin croaking just before rain starts to fall. The folks mistake the croaking of the frogs as the cause of rain. Logicians will identify this fallacy (of mistaking an event taking place

before another event happens as the cause of the latter) and call as after this, therefore because of this. Most of the rituals of imitative magic are based upon a mistaken comprehension of cause and effect or a confusion of cause and effect. Frogs are always involved in imitative magic rituals in many parts of the world. Mukkudal Pallu, a beautiful poem describing the life of Pallans, (the untouchable agricultural labourers of Tamil Nadu) of the eighteenth century, describes the changes in weather and nature indicating the imminent fall of rain ? The Pallan, the hero of the poem, calls his caste men and women and forecasts rain from the signs of 'croaking of the frog,' the gentle wind, coolness of the air and the appearance of black clouds in the sky. There is no trace of magic here. The sudden change in the natural phenomena indicating rainfall enables him to forecast rain. He immediately calls upon them to celeberate a festival to worship all the gods of the village before the agricultural season is initiated. The Pallan does not perform magical rituals, but worships gods and spirits related to agriculture. The use of frog as a ritual aid is described in the following account of a magic ritual which was prevalent in Andhra tile very recent times and is even now a living custom among Malas, (the untouchables) in some parts of the region.

"Malas, the Telugu Pariahs tie a live frog to a mortar and put on the top there a mud figure representing the deity Gontiamma. They take these objects in processions singing :

Frog as Ritual Aid :

"Mother frog playing in water,
Pour rain by potsful."

"The villagers of other castes then come and pour water over the Malas. The Rev. S. Nicholson informs me that to produce rain in the Telugu country, two boys capture a frog and put it in a basket with some neem leaves. They tie the basket to the middle of a stick which they support of their shoulders. In this manner they make a circuit of the village visiting every house singing the praise of the god of rain. The greater the noise the captured animal makes, the more the gain for the boys, for at every house they receive something in recognition of their endeavour to bring rain upon the village fields."[8]

Frog Marriage :

R. V. Russel[9] reports, "*Bhatra, the primitive tribe of Bastar* in Central Provinces of India, when it desires to bring on rain, performs a frog marriage". The beliefs embedded in these rituals appear to be,

1. The croaking noise of the frog will produce rain. So it must be made to croak.
2. The frogs should be made happy by marriage. They will produce litle frogs that will increase the croaking noise.
3. The association of frogs with water is the reason for them to believe that it will cause rain. Other objects used in rain magic are conch shell, pearl sherk, pebbles, which are believed to produce rain, because of their long association with water.

Magical Ritual and Worship in Vinayaka Chaturti :

Pouring water over a small heap of mud or cow dung, so that the heap is washed away, constitutes a widespread rain magic ritual. It is accompanied by prayer songs or merely magical charms Vinayaka (Ganesa) a member of the Siva family is related to agriculture and success in all undertakings in the folk-mind.[10] Usually he is symbolised as a heap of earth or a piece of cow dung shaped like a cone with a curved top. Most often an image of his is made of clay. The Vinayaka Chaturti day falls in the month of Avani, a month before the agricultural season begins in dry areas in Tamil Nadu. It is the month when the South West monsoon is in full swing in the Southern districts. The celebration of Vinayaka Chaturti in part includes prayer for rain and fertility.

This is how it is celebrated. Thousands of images of Vinayaka are made of clay by the potters and sold to the worshippers. They bring the images home and worship them offering fruits, sugarcane and a dish called Kolukkattai (powdered rice mixed with gram and pieces of coconut ernel, made into balls and cooked over steam). Then the images are taken in procession by boys and men to the river or tank and immersed in water.

This ritual consists of both magical and religious elements. The image is made of clay which represents the soil. The ceremony

is only a fertility rite in which paddy, turmeric and seeds of various grains are placed before the image. It symbolises the desire of the worshippers for multiplication of the seeds and roots. Finally the image are destroyed by immersing them in water or drenching them with water. The wish for rain is implied in this proceeding. In certain parts of North Arcot District in Tamil Nadu, there is prevalent a celebration called eruel Distribution Ceremony. This celebration is aimed at bringing rain.

This 'gruel distribution' was celebrated in Chellampattu village in North Arcot District till three years ago.[12]

An announcement is made by the beat of drum that the celebration will be held before the Gangaiamman Temple of the village on the following day. All the farmers cook gruel with grain and water and carry it in vessels to the maidan in front of the temple. It is poured into large vessels called Kopparai. All the people of the village gather there. The gruel is distributed to all; especially the untouchables are fed to their fill. Then they go to a tank some distance from the temple and bring water from it. On their way to the temple from their houses the villagers sing songs in praise of Ganga the river goddess. The ceremony includes religious rites and secular charity. The appeal is to the water goddess Ganga to bring down rain. The reason for drought, in the minds of the folks, is lack of charity and generosity on the part of the farmers of the village. The hunger of the poor has made their stomachs hot. The heat from their stomachs has made the clouds dry. The ceremony provides an occasion for the farmers to extend charity to the poor. The gruel appeases the heat in the stomachs of the poor. The farmers perform dharma. Ganga will be pleased and her anger will cool down. Then there will be showers soon. This is the folk-belief about gruel distribution.

Similar celebrations are common to many parts of Tamil Nadu where drought is parennial. In Koilpatti, Ottapidaram and Vilathikulam taluks of Tirunelveli District, where rainfall is much below par, the gruel distribution ceremony is held in times of serious drought. The procedure of gruel distribution is the same as described above.

Gangamma Nataka Battle between Ganga and Mari :

In Chellampattu and villages in its neighbourhood, a folk play is put on stage in the night. The theme of the play is the struggle between Ganga, water goddess and Mari, goddess of disease. This theme is very significant, since it reveals folk-attitudes to the roles of Gangamman and Mariamman in the play. Gangamman is related to rain, which if it falls in season will prevent spread of disease and will be conducive to good health. The following is the story of the folk-play.[13]

Gangai left her place on the head of Siva and came down into the earth. She was born in a Brahmin family. She granted good health to the people and became very popular among the village folks. There were two kinds of diseases from which people were suffering, Vishnu fever and Siva fever. She fought against the spirits of the two kinds of fever and defeated them. Mariamma, who is the goddess of smallpox and other dreadful diseases, became enraged with Ganga for interfering with her work of destruction. She went to battle against Ganga with her army of evil spirits. Ganga fought back with her army of water spirits. The two enemies fought for many years without success for any one of them. Then Kali joined Mari against Ganga and the battle between the goddesses continued. The gods on high were worried. The warring goddesses, Mari, Kali and Ganga were the sisters of Vishnu. All of them were wives of Siva. Hence the brothers-in-law, Siva and Vishnu decided to intervene and stop the war. They appeared to the goddesses and introduced Ganga to the elder sisters, who had not known her identity as their sister. Peace was made among them. Thanks to the good offices of the masters of the universe.

Symbolic Battle between Disease and Rain :

Ganga represents benovolent powers of Nature, while Mari and Kali, its malevolent powers. The struggle between the goddesses dramatises the struggle between favourable and unfavourable aspects of Nature interfering with human life. It was the destiny ordered by gods that two powers should co-exist in an equilibrium.

The victories of Ganga over Vishnu fever and Siva fever represent the fact that if there was no dearth of water in a region, diseases no not occur. Rain is necessary for man to subsist and live a healthy life.

The staging of this play is believed to produce rain within three days.

Shedding Tears and Weeping to Melt the Heart of Rain god :

If even after the celebration of the ceremony and staging of this play, rain does not fall for many days, the folks throw up their trump-card.

The widows of the villages gather in the village common and set up loud wails of of lamentation, as if their husbands died just then. They beat their breasts and cry, shedding tears.

This lamentation is believed to melt the hard heart of Varuna or Ganga whoever is responsible for rain. The tears are related to rain in the magic rituals of the primitives of several parts of the world.

Gloomy songs are sung, which resemble dirges (oppari in Tamil) appealing to the gods and spirits of rain to bring down showers.[14]

A few samples from folk-songs may not be out of place.

Pathetic Appeal to the Rain God :

I performed Puja for one day - Narayana;

No rain showered to help ploughing - Narayana.

Since there was no rain the seedlings have withered - Narayana;

I performed worship for three days - Narayana.

Rain drops resembling pearl didn't fall-Narayana;

Pearl plants have all withered - Narayana,

I performed Puja for five days - Narayana,

There was no rain in the month of Adi - Narayana.

Without rain in the month of Adi - Narayana,

The whole earth has become dry - Narayana.

Collector : S. Sadaiyappan
Place : Chakkilipatti, Dharmapuri District.
Year : 1963

Comment is unnecessary except for the address, Narayana. Narayana is described in Puranas as sleeping on his serpentine bed floating on the ocean of milk. The word itself means water. So he is addressed in this appeal to grant them rain. But this address can be easily varied from place to place to refer to Gangamma, Mariamma, Varunadeva or the name of any other deity believed to have control over rain and wind.

Appeal to Varuna :

Here is a prayer addressed to Varunadeva, the Sanskritic rain god. It is a realistic description of the miserable plight of the farmers and peasants enmeshed in the clutches of famine.

We have sold our oxen and our sheep, Varunadeva !

We have sold everything (we possessed) Varunadeva !

We have sold even our bangles Varunadeva !

What a terrible famine, we eat Jettikai Varunadeva !

Famine still stalks the land Varunadeva !

People eat Karankai, and become deaf ;

People eat Karaikkai and die Varunadeva ;

The seeds sown by my children must be harvested ;

The seeds sown united with the labour of my children must bear fruit.

Shall we harvest grain and bring it (home) Varunadeva ?

The hands of my brothers cannot grip the handle of the plough ;

The peasants who must drive the plough are weighed down by sorrow,

You must take pity on them, Varunadeva.

Then the singer breaks out with joyous note imagining that Varunadeva has heard their appeal and showered rain on the fields.

Rain comes down like a host of spirits;

It falls down like needles and settles on the land.

Collector : Sadaiappan
Place : Chakkilipatti village, Dharmapuri District.

The emotion changes; joy turns to sorrow. They find that it is raining only in the town and not in the village.

The rain that showers in the city does not fall on our village ;

It falls like silver coins all around

It does not pass us by ; it begins to rain here too ;

Let it rain. let it rain everywhere.

Burning the Cruel Sinner :

In the Southern Districts of Tamil Nadu in times of severe drought and famine, the folks perform a curious ritual called the burning of the 'cruel sinner' (Kotumpaavi) In a village which is affected by perennial drought, the villagers decide to drag along the streets the cruel sinner of the village and burn him. This ritual is based on the belief that if a sinner lives in a village, rain will not fall. This is how this ritual is performed.[15]

The leaders of the village decide the date on which the sinner will be burned. An effigy resembling a man is made of straw, rags and waste paper. It is placed on a ladder-like frame, customarily used to carry the corpse to the crematory. The effigy is placed on the frame and bound to it. A few persons drag the frame by means of a rope tied to it. The village barber carries a pot containing pieces of red-hot charcoal. In real funeral processions either the barber or the son of the dead person carries the pot of

burning charcoal. The barber therefore represents the son of the cruel sinner who is supposed to be dead. Two or three folk-singers follow the effigy, beating on their breasts and crying aloud. They heap abuses at the dead sinner, saying that by his cruel deeds he had brought suffering on all the people. In the lamentations the singers catalougue the cruelty of rich men, landlords, money-lenders, the merchant who adulterates his goods and all those who cheat the people. It is used as an occasion to ventilate publicly all the grievances of the villagers against persons, who dominate the village. The effigy is stopped in its persons, who dominate the village. The effigy is stopped in its procession before every house. The 'mourners' receive cash payment and rice for their services. The effigy is dragged to the village crematorium and burned just like a corpse.

Public Explusion of Sin :

The ritual can be interpreted in the light of beliefs of the folks and the primitive people.

"Sometimes the primitive man attempts to rid the whole community of its troubles by a general and public expulsion of evils."[15]

Frazer notes that, "Sometimes the evils which are publicly expelled from the community either occasionally or periodically are believed to be embodied in material form, whether animate or inanimate."

Sin-bearers, Scapegoats :

These are called scapegoats by Frazer. "The primitives of Southern Nigeria, in times of great public calamity, when all other remedies had failed, took recourse to the sacrifice of a human scapegoat. He must be a young man strong and vigourous, well-able to bear the sins of those on whose behalf he was to die. He was the sin-bearer of his whole community. All the people transferred their sins to him. The whole crowd, that had gathered to witness the sacrifice, treated him as an accursed creature. They spat upon him kicked and stoned him. They continued to drag

him through the streets until he died. *In this ritual, there was a* human sacrifice".

In the New Year celebrations, *animal-effigies were burned* in Southern Nigeria according to a report by Rev. Hope Waddel.[16] His account of the ceremony, which he had often witnessed, runs as follows :

"At about two O'clock on the last night of the old year, the inhabitants of each compound ran round it, crying,

"Father mine! Mother mine!
Devils must go!"

Gongs were sounded 'Poom! Poom!' Torches were lighted and burning wood knocked against the wall in every corner, while the cry, "Devils must go", was ceaselessly called. Next morning every scrap of cooked food or drop of drink, left over from the night before, had to be thrown away together with any cracked or broken pans and the sticks used, for driving forth the devils. The Nabikum were burned and their ashes were strewn to the four winds. Nabikum may be figures roughly resembling human beings or figures of animals representing totems".

Symbolic sacrifice of Scopegoats :

In this account, the scapegoat is an effigy either in human or animal form. We can clearly see from the two accounts given above, that the effigies are representations of everything bad and harmful, evil or sin.

It is a substitute for the human evil bearer in account number one.

The mock killing of a sinner or a sin-bearer is a modern substitute for an ancient custom of killing them in earnest.

"Those who best know the tenacity of life possessed by folk-custom and its tendency, with the growth of civilisation, to dwindle from solemn *ritual* into mere pageant and pastime, will be the least likely to question the truth of this assumption. That human sacrifices were commonly offered by the ancestors of the

civilized races of North Europe, Celts, Teutons and Slavs is certain. It is not, therefore, surprising that the modern peasant should do in *mimicry, what his forefathers did in reality*."[17] we shall cite only a few instances, nearer home from India, of mimic human sacrifices.

E. Thurston reports in his "Castes and Lives of Southern India" the following :

"The Malayans, a caste of South India; act as devil-dancers for the purpose of exercising demons who have taken possession of people. One of the ceremonies known, has several forms, all of which seem to be either survivals or at least imitation of human *sacrifice. One of these consists of a mock living burial of the* principal performer, who is placed in a pit, which is covered with planks on the top of which a sacrifice is performed with a fire kindled with jack-wood and a plant called *crina. In another variety,* the Malayan cuts his left forearm and smears his face with blood".

Dutton has pointed out that, "An Indian law book Calica Purana prescribes that when the sacrifice of lions, tigers and human beings is required, an image of a lion, tiger, or man shall be made with butter, paste or barley meal and sacrificed instead".

Commenting upon it J. G. Frazer writes : "Some of the tribes of India formerly offered human sacrifices; they now offer straw-men which are found to answer the purpose just as well. The Colonial Doctor *was told that in some of their villages Bhagats* usually make an image of a man in wood put ornaments and clothes on it, and present it before the altar of Mahadeo. The person officiating as priest on the occasion says: "O Mahadeo, we sacrifice this man to you according to ancient customs. Give us rain in due season and plentiful harvest".

I believe that sufficient evidence has been adduced to support the hypothesis that a human sacrifice can be substituted by the beheading or burning of an effigy. The real sacrifice is then reduced to a mock or mimic sacrifice, which is considered as good as the *real* one in producing results.

Just as real human sacrifice was believed to exorcise evil and bring on rain, so the substitute mock sacrifices also could produce the same result.

Offering of Hair to God, Symbolic Sacrifice of the Head:

It is a common religious practice in Dravidian region to offer hair shaved of the head to deities on the occasion of a birth-day or before marriage. It may be that the person was offered as sacrifice, if death or calamity will not occur to a family. This may be assumed to be mimic sacrifice of the hair for the head. It is not mere coincidence that in some Dravidian languages the same word thalai (Tamil), thale ammeda thala (Malayalam) thala (Telugu) denote both head and hair on the head. There are references of head being offered as a sacrifice by heroic soldiers ro the goddess of victory in the middle ages in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka from writings and figure's found on herostones. In later days this practice of cutting off the head (talai) was replaced by cutting off the hair (talai).

Mock Human Sacrifice, J. G. Frazer :

J. G. Frazer has quoted 21 instances of mock or mimic sacrifices, in which the human victim is substituted by an effigy or the victim is only symbolically killed. The instances are from all parts of the world.

The section headings of the chapter on Human sacrifice of his book, "The Dying God" indicate that mimic sacrifice was widespread.

"The mock killing of the leafy mummers probably substitute for an old custom of killing them in earnest, substitution of mock human sacrifices for real ones in Minahassa, Arizona, Niar, and elsewhere; mock human sacrifices carried out in effigy in ancient Egypt, India, Siam, Japan and elsewhere; mimic sacrifices of fingers; mimic rite of circumcision".[18]

Therefore we shall be quite within the limits of evidence if we interpret the burning of the effigy of the cruel sinner as a mimic sacrifice of an 'evil-bearer' or 'sin-bearer' to rid themselves of their sufferings caused by drought or famine.

Symbolic Sacrifice of Finger by Marasa Hokkaligas :

I shall close this discussion on mimic sacrifice of a scape-goat or evil-bearer with one more piece of evidence for the substitution of an imminate object for the sacrifice of a part of the body. "It is the current custom of women who have borne two or more children, in the 'Marasa Hokkaliga' community living around Mysore. The actual sacrifice of two fingers cut off at their first ring was reported by an eye witness to an English Deputy Commissioner a hundred years ago. He wrote a newsletter to Indian Antiquary, which was published in Vol. IV. A Bangalore Brahmin Narasimha Iyenger investigated the report and wrote an article which was published in the Indian Antiquary Vol. V. In 1903, E. Thourston published an article entitled "Deformity and Mutilation" about the same practice.
This is what he writes :

"In Southern India as in many parts of the world, it used to be customary to sacrifice joints of the fingers on certain occasions. Thus among the Marasas, when a grandchild was born in the family, the wife of the eldest son of the grandfather must have the last two joints of the third and fourth fingers of her right hand amputated at the temple of Bhirana. The amputation was performed by the village carpenter with a chisel. Nowadays the custom having been forbidden by the English Government, the sacrifice is performed in mimicry. Some people stick gold or silver pieces with flour paste to the ends of their fingers and then cut or pull them off. Others wind flowers round the fingers that have to be amputated, and go through a pantomine of cutting the fingers by putting a chisel on the joint and them taking it away. Others again twist gold wires in the shape of rings round their fingers. These the carpenter removes and appropriates."

Recurring Famines and Folk-songs :

The recurring famines during the period of British rule had pulled up the rural life by the roots. All the human values were at stake. The harrowing conditions of our peasantry, the salt of the earth, struck the chords of sympathy in the hearts of our folk and literary poets, who had love for the folks. *A terrible famine*

hit the whole of TamilNadu a hundred years ago, including the most fertile retile region of the Cauvery basin. It gave rise to poetic expression of the sorrow and despair of the tillers of the soil.

Folk-Songs or Famine :

I shall quote two folk-songs as samples for the type of famine songs that arose in the year of terrible famine known as Dhatu Year Famine. The song is purported to have been sung by women as an appeai to the Rain God (Varuna).

Having faith in mother earth. we came in search of our sons.
The earth turning hard-hearted, our children have left (abroad)
The sky turning hard-hearted our chiidren have left (abroad)
Our brothers who hold the handle of the plough, stand dazed.
Hearing their sighs, come down, Varunadeva.
Our brothers who hold the plough (in the field)
stand with bowed heads.
Hearing their moans, come down Varunadeva.
Their fingers are bruised, because they plucked
leaves from the thorny plants.
Rain has not fallen, the bruised fingers have not healed.
Rain has not come down, our suffering has not ceased,
When will the sky smile, when will famine come to an end,
When will the land turn green and our sons have plenty
to eat ?
The ragi seeds we sowed burying about must yield
harvest and the corn must be brought home.
The seeds we sowed as we sang has not yielded harvest
to be brought home to fill our pots.

Singer : Muthusamy
Collector : K. Chinnappa Bharati
Place : Valanaicken Palayam, Salem District.
Year : 1962

. The women of a village performed a ceremonial ritual for bringing on rain. The made a paste of white flour and drew on the ground ritual designs. It is hoped that the flour will attract ants and the ants moving towards the temple will cause rainfall. But their hopes were belied.

There was no rain even after the rituals ended. The women sing :

For lightning to break (the sky) like needles,
For water to gush out of water holes,
For the well to fill with water,
We prepared flour paste in pots;
We drew designs all over the market place ;
The designs have not been washed off ;
Rain has not come down ;
We prepared flour part in cups and sketched
designs all over the bank of Ganga ;
Rain has not poured down
Our brothers who hold the handle of the plough
Stand in the fields with withered faces,
Our brothers who hold the plough, stand in the field
without strength to lift their hands.

Singer : M. Krishnan
Collector : K. Chinnappa Bharati
Place : Paramasihi, Salem District.
Year : 1962

There was a widely held belief among the folks that rain could be brought down by magical religious rites. The forces that caused rain could withhold it, if sin accumulates in a village, when the inhabitants become selfish, greedy and cruel.

Rain thus withholding itself, could be made to fare by magical practice reinforced by worship and prayer to Varuna.

Narayana and Gangamma. In the rituals aimed at producing rain, the element of inititive magic predominates over that of religious worship and prayer.

As more and more literacy and knowledge of science diffuse among them, the real causes for rain and climatic changes are being understood. These magic religious ritual based on old world beliefs are being slowly given up, for folk custom is very persistent. But when the basis for the belief is being knocked out by dissemination of science among our masses resulting in the rise in literacy and spread of education among the present generation of rural youth, these beliefs are being given up. The ancient belief in magical causation of rain is referred to in poems of the Sangam Period. Vedars or Eynars, who lived on mountain slopes, climbed to the summit of the mountains and threw up flour and flowers, which fell scattering on the rocks. While they performed this ritual, they called to the rain to come down. This is clearly a magical ritual.

A separate section, entitled Rain and the Introductory Remarks, immediately following Patikams in the epic Cilappadi-karam, contains an expression of the belief that the sacrifice of sin-bearers and evil-bearers to a goddess or a disembodied soul, seeking revenge, will put an end to drought and famine and sufferings of the people by bringing on rain.

A free translation of the passage referred to above is appended below.

1. From that day seasonal rains failed in the land of your country. Poverty, disease and famine affected the people of the land, The Pandyan King, who had his residence in Korkai, sacrificed for 'Nangai', one thousand goldsmiths and celebrated a propitiation festival in her honour. Rain fell in floods and the land became prosperous again. People were delivered from disease and suffering.

2. Hearing about this event, the 'Ilankosar' of 'Kongu' (country) celebrated a festival of propititation, in honour of 'Nangai'. As a result, there was perennial rainfall in the country.

3. Hearing about this event, Kayavahu, the king of Lanka (surrounded by the sea) believing that 'Nangai' would expel suffering from his land, erected an attar of sacrifice and instituted a periodical festival of worship to her. Rains never failed causing prosperity to the country.

4. Hearing this, the Chola (King) Perunkilli believing that Nangai was really a goddess of chastity, constructed a Pattini temple for her and instituted rituals of daily worship to her."[19]

There is no agreement In assigning a date to the epic Chilappadikaram among scholars. It is variedly believed to have been composed at some time between the first century A. D. and the sixth century A. D. Even if the latest date suggested is accepted, this passage refers to a belief and ritual that existed fourteen centuries ago. This presents a complex belief system recognised by the rulers of the various kingdoms of Tamil Nadu and also Lanka.

Nangai, actually meaning 'the woman', refers to the heroine of the epic. The haste in administering justice by the Pandyan King resulted in the death of the innocent hero, Kovalan. The story goes to say that as a punishment for this injustice, Kannagi, the heroine destroyed the Pandyan capital Madurai, setting fire to the city by tearing off her left breast and throwing it with blood flowing from it up in the sky. Then she left for the Chera country, where she was taken in a 'Vimana' to the other world. Cenkuttuvan, the king of the country, constructed a temple for her and installed a stone idol of her in it.

This is an inverted form of deification of heroes, A women, who had demonstrated the magical powers of a chaste woman, was for the first time honoured with a temple.

The passage refers to sacrifices and propititation rituals (Santi) performed by four kings in their kingdoms.

The first passage is most relevant to our purpose. The king of the Pandyan country removed his capital to the harbour city of Korkai after Madurai was destroyed by fire. The injustice and sin of his father of having killed an innocent person, caused failure of

rains resulting in famine, suffering and disease in the kingdom. The belief contained in this narration is clearly that the sin and injustice of the king is punished by affliction on the people of his kingdom. A goldsmith was responsible for bringing about the unjust murder of the hero of the epic. The whole community of goldsmiths became 'sin-bearers' according to the epic. The king sacrificed one thousand goldsmiths to 'the woman'. This is actual human sacrifice of the type of sacrificing the evil-bearers to propitiate the wrath of the goddess, who in her human life had been wronged.

The kings of Kongu country and Lanka only followed the example of the Chera king in deifying the heroine, but there is no mention of human sacrifice. They are reported to have instituted the cult of Pattini (Chaste women) in their kingdoms.

In the Kingdom of the heroine, King Perunkilli, constructed and dedicated a temple for her, believing that she was the Pattini goddess and that she would grant boons to those who worshipped her, He instituted daily worship to her in his capital city.

Here a new belief gains ground and is integrated in the system of old beliefs. The new belief, introduced into the existing belief system, is the magical power of a chaste woman over weather and rain. One of the aims of the epic being the vindication of the power of chastity, the chaste woman is made to produce fire from her severed breast and blood. Fire is contradictory to rain. Symbolically the spirit that caused it should be pacified by propitiation. The power of the chaste woman over nature and rain found expression in poetry long before the epic was written. Thus Valluvar wrote :

If a woman who worshipped no god but her husband, orders he rain to fall, it will obey.[20]

Other poets followed him in saying that if a chaste woman lives in a country the rain god will never "forget his duty".

The belief that if there is one good man living in a country, rain will descend, because his good deeds will benefit all people

The chaste woman's power to control nature can be tapped by propitiating her by sacrifice.

Hense arose the cult of Pattini. It spread to vast areas, after the story of Cilappadikaram became widely known.

In the light of our discussion on the beliefs about rainfall, we can interpret this passage as follows.

1. The sin of the king is visited upon his subjects.

2. The people are punished by drought, famine and disease.

3. Rain may be persuaded to descend by sacrificing the 'evil-bearers'. The whole "Jati" of the evil-doer was branded as sinners and a thousand representatives of the "jati" were sacrificed.

4. The soul of the woman could cause rain to fall, because in her human life, she could produce fire from her breast. It is symbolic, that her soul, all a flame with anger at the wrongs done to her, could burn the city with her blood. The heat of her soul after it had left the body, could be quenched only by shedding the blood of the 'sin-bearers'.

5. After the blood of the sin-bearers had been shed, the hot soul was cooled which in turn cooled the weather and that produced rain.

Descendants of Sinners Became Sin-bearers who Worshipped Murdered Man.

It is not a mere guess, that the descendants of a 'sinner' become the sin-bearers It is a very strong belief among the descendants of the 'sinners' themselves especially in the case of murder. This belief is at the base of a cult called "Madan Cult" in Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli Districts. A word of explanation is necessary. Madan cult is widespread in these districts. There deities are worshipped as 'Kula Deivam (Family deities). People of particular families or the whole village may worship them, but

it is recognised by them that each Madan is the Kula Deivam of a particular family. I investigated the origin of a few Madan deities from the families which worshipped them as Kula deiva. The reason for the adoption of Madans as family deities is the same in all the cases I investigated. Therefore only one legend is sufficient to illustrate my theory. Near Sivakalai, a village on the road to Tiruchendur, 5 or 6 miles from the town, Srivaikuntam, there is an open shrire under a tree known as "Pagatai Madan Peeta". There are two brick structures standing on a platform representing two deities. The origin of the story of the two Madans is narrated by the worshippers as follows :

There lived two brothers belonging to the Chakkili (Madiga in Telugu) caste who became wealthy by *trading in hides*. They rode on horse-back to Tuticorin a port city to sell leather, Carts loaded with hides followed them. Riding on horseback was the privilege of the men of higher 'jatis'. If low caste men rode on horseback, they had to get down and walk, while they passed villages inhabited by people of higher castes. The rich traders refused to be humiliated in this manner. The leaders of the higher castes were angry at them for what they considered insolent conduct. They engaged two killers to murder them, when they would pass their settlement on their return journey. When the traders were on their way to their viilage, the men stopped them and begged them to stay in their village, have rest for the night and resume their journey the next morning. Duped by their sweet words, the traders dismounted and went with the two killers and stayed under a tree. At night they were given liquor mixed with a narcotic, which dulled their senses. The killers severed their heads and buried their bodies.

The killers were seized with fear that the spirits of the murdered men would surely seek revenge. To ward off the danger to their lives at the hands of the spirits. they built an altar under the tree, raised two peetas and performed rituals of propititation a few years after the incident. The worship and rituals were continued to be performed by the descendants of the killers. The present worshippers, say that the deities were installed a hundered years ago. They also informed me that the Chakkilis also raised a peeta and worshipped them.

The Madans are deities originating from murdered men transformed into revenge-seeking spirits. They have to be propitiated to ward off them.

They are worshipped both by the people, who caused death and also by the people to whom they belonged. The sin of murder passed on to the descendants, who continued propitiation in fear of harm of the spirits of the murdered men. Thus the cult arose.

Pattini cult had also a similar origin. But Pattini is not a family deity. It had become a deity of the whole kingdoms because of its power over rain.

Modern folk-belief about the cause of rain and rituals necessary for its production, is a combination of these elements, initiative magic, propitiation rites, customary worship, co-operative celebration, sacrifice of scapegoats and mimic sacrifice.

RAIN IN FOLKLORE

[1] J. G. Frazer Chap. on Rain in Golden Bough Vol. VI

[2] Mills, quoted in Golden Bough Vol. VI

[3] J. Abbort. quoted in Golden Bough Vol. VI

[4] Field observations: this ceremony called 'uriadi' is observed in all temples of Krishna and a few temples of Vishnu on Krishna Jayanthi Day.

Places of observation; Nanguneri in Tirunelveli District; Srivaikuntam in Tirunelveli Distrtct

Srivilliputtur in Ramnad District; Sriperumpudur in Chengalpattu District.

Field observation: Kumba ritual is prevalent in all 'Isakki,' 'Chelvi' temples. It is performed on the ninth day of the Navaratri Festival and annual celebration of Kodai after the harvest in Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari Districts of Tamil-Nadu.

6 D. D. Kosambi 'Myth and Reality' Chapter on the 'Junction of Four Highways'. He describes the rituals performed at the junction of highways to propitiate the mother goddess, Marama.

7 'Mukkudal Pallu' - Author unknown. A Tamil poem describing the life of labour of the Pallars, who worked on the fields belonging to the Vishnu temple in Tirunelveli District.

8 Rev. Nicholson quoted in 'Anthoropological notes on South India' Vol. II. Sec. on Rain Magic.

9 R. V. Russel quoted ibid.

10 Sankar Sengupta; Ganesha a member of Siva family 'Aaraychi' (Ta) Vol. III-2.

11 Field observation : in many districts of Tamil Nadu by N. Vanamamalai, S. Varadarajan and T. Mangai.

12 Field observation by K. Govinda Reddy, Karnataka University. The beliefs were recorded from accounts provided by the old men of the village to which K. Govinda Reddy belongs.

13 The theme of the play was recorded by K, Govinda Reddy at Sellampattu, South Arcot District.

14 Field observation in many villages in Dharmapuri, Tirunelveli and Ramnad Districts. N. Vanamamalai

15 J. G. Frazer 'Golden Bough' Vol. VI. Section on scapegoats and symbolic sacrifice.

16 Rev. Hope Waddel quoted ibid.

17 J. G. Frazer 'Golden Bough' Vol. VI. Chapter on Human Sacrifices.

18 J. G. Frazer 'Golden Bough' The dying God Vol. VI

19 Ilankovadikal 'Cilappadikaram (padikam)' Tamil epic Introduction in prose. Lines 1-4 are free translations of the padikam.

20 Tiruvalluvar 'Tirukkural' Chapter 6 Verse 55. Translations by N. Vanamamalai.

WOMAN AND FERTILITY

Chapter Summary :

A folk-song of the type 'Mulai Pari'; sung in connection with the fertility rite, has been analysed as to its content and significance. The ideas and ritualistic procedures set forth in this song are fairly representative; and they imply a belief in the mutual induction, may correspondence, between a child-bearing mother and the earth. The ritual activity of the 'Mulai Pari' is devoid of any supernatural element. The materials used as well as the procedures are directly relatable to the process of agriculture and only indirectly relatable to the process of human procreation. The charm song sung during the festival describes the growth of a foetus and expresses a wish for a child as well as for seed germination. A deep-throated, high-pitched 'kuravai' (see notes at the end of chapter) forms the finale to the rites.

These 'Mulai Pari' rites are compared to similar fertility rites in the village of Kallapura in Mysore region where the influence of elite religion has interpolated both supernatural elements in the form of a god and a priest. From a historical account of the evolution of rites in Kallapura, certain anthropological conclusions have been drawn. Mainly, there has been an evolution from a belief in imitative and contagious magic through reinforcement of the same magic by organised religion to a straight petitionary prayer addresed to a major God.

Woman and Fertility :

Agricultural labour is the main form of labour the women perform. Many types of labour songs were sung by women till a few decades ago. Many of them were songs about agricultural operations like weeding, transplanting or harvesting. Most of these songs have vanished. Only very old women remember such songs.

An important type of song known as "Mulai Pari" is sung during festivals dedicated to the germination of seeds. Only a few songs of this type have been collected and recorded. I recently collected a song with the help of my pupil Kasiviswanathan from a village, Neeravi Puduppatti near Ettayapuram, Tamilnadu. It expresses the belief of the folks that germination is a process closely similar to childbirth. The song provides material for anthropological analysis.

THE SONG

I Preparations

AUSPICIOUS DAY

In the month of Chitra on Chitra Day
on Tuesday, the fullmoon day,
all the villagers sit in a meeting and
talk things over. They call the
washerman and ask him to announce.

(THE DATE OF THE GERMINATION FESTIVAL)

Hearing this announcement, the women come
with cocoanut shells. (kottam--Tamil)
Their children walk before them.

THE WASHERMAN SONG :

Spill maize, spill ragi and spill seeds
stored in your house, mustard, green gram,
peas, horse gram, beans, dhal, castor,

cotton and all seeds (You have)
(One more than the nine kinds of grain (Navadhanya)
Spill all kinds of seeds into this vessel. (Kopparai-Tamil)
Soak them in this vessel (in water). Bring
ragi straw from the farmer's straw stacks. Bring
maize straw and cut the leaves off. Go to the
cow-sheds (of cowherds) and bring cow's excreta.
Go to the sheep-fold and bring sheep-manure.
Bring from the potter broken parts of pots. (Odu)
Break the pots in Vellala's garden.

II RAIN

The lightning breaks in the sky like needles,
The (cloud) hangs down like huge rafters.
The scattered cloud like pasi becomes cool
There is thunder and rain. Flood flows within
the banks (of the river).

III The Ritual Activity

The woman dip themselves in the flooded river.
They clothe themselves in silk covering their
shoulders with a part of the cloth folded like
a band. They plant a pole (auspicious, lucky),
They arrive at Kammavar Kulam. (a tank) They bring
black earth after washing the pounding mill
(a stone with a depression used for pounding paddy),
They beat with pestles the cow-dung. They spread
the seeds on the mixture. Now sound once the Kuravai a
whistle-like sound-see notes at the end of chapert.

IV. CHARM SONG

She will beget a girl in her first delivery
The baby will be named after her grandmother,
In the first month (in the mother's womb)
it will be like a bud.

In the second month, it will grow like a pearl,

In the fourth month it will grow like a 'belad'.

In the fifth month it will be like panchavarna (a parrot)

In the sixth month - it will grow.

In the seventh month her nose will be as sharp as an iron file

In the eighth month - a holy thread will be tied round the mother's waist.

V. THE REWARD FOR PARTICIPATION

All maidens will bring muringai and pavakkai (vegetables)

They will offer them to the Mother Goddess

They will bring fresh water and sprinkle the water (before the Goddess)

Surely happiness will attend on her

Even if a eunuch sprinkless water, she will deliver Indra (a son)

Even if a barren woman sprinkles water, she will deliver a King.

Shel will be get sixteen children

They will live like Markandeya

They will beget sixteen children and live like Perumal (Vishnu)

In the month of Chitra, Chitra Day, Tuesday on a Fullmoon day

The content of the song is an excellent illustration of the belief in the mutual induction of fertility of the earth andthewoman. The 'Mulaipari' festival is celebrated everywhere very nearly according to the procedure set forth in this song. The germination festival is prevalent in many villages in the neighbourhood of Ettayapuram. In the north, a few miles away begins the boundary of Ramnad district. In many villages on the banks of the river Vaigai, this festival is celebrated nearly according to the procedure described in this song. In Tanjavur District described as the rice granary of Tamil Nadu it is celebrated in literature as,

'Cholanadu Chorudaithu' (Tamil)

(The Chola country has abundance of food)

The germination festival is widely prevalent. In that district where the lands are watered by the waters of the never-failing Cauvery, the river is worshipped as mother Cauvery'.

In its holiness and its power of fertilising the earth, Cauvery is compared to Ganga by the Tamil and Kannada poets. In Khota folk-songs, Cauvery is addressed as Kaveri Amma (Mother Cauvery) [2]

In the regions watered by Cauvery, the germination festival is widespread wherever water from Cauvery is available for irrigating the fields. Scores of songs about the festival of Mulaipari is current among the folks. But not a single song has been recorded in full. The only song recorded in full, describing the rituals in detail, is the one I have quoted above.

The Ritual :

I shall take this song as representative of a type of songs on the subject of ritual beliefs about germination.

This belief in the mutual induction of fertility power, is most wide spread. Other beliefs are also prevalent side by side with this belief. I shall cite an example of such beliefs, that modifies the original belief of induction, after I have commented upon the ritual described in the song quoted.

The song describes ritual taking place in five stages.

I. Decision :

The village council decides to hold the festival to secure fertility and announces it to the village. It orders the washerman to announce it.

II. Announcement :

The washerman announces the date of the festival and calls upon the women to participate. In a song he asks them to bring materials used in the ritual. They are ... ...

1. Seeds of all plants usually grown in the village,
(He mentions 10 seeds)

2. Cow-dung and sheep-mannure

III. *Rainfall :*

3. The preparation for the festival is believed to bring down rain. The river is flooded. If there is no river a substitute is easily found in a tank or well.

4. Ritual begins - purification.
Women bathe in the river, wearing clothes fitting the festive occasion ; they bring materials for rituals.

IV. *The Ritual Activity :*

The procedure of the ritual consists of the following :

1. They plant a pole.

2. They bring black earth and seed in broken coconut shells.

3. They bring cow-dung and sheep-manure.

4. They spill all the seeds into the water in a large vessel. They sing a charm song.

5. They wash the hole of a stone with a depression in it.

6. They put the earth and manure and beat it with a pestle.

7. They remove the manure and spread the soaked seeds on it.

Then they raise 'Kuruvai' a sort of whistling sound from their throats.

V. *The Charm :*

Then they sing a song of rejoicing.

This song describes the growth of the foetus in the womb. This is merely an expression, a wish for a child as well as a wish that seeds should germinate.

The eunuchs and barren women are not excluded from the fertility rites in spite of the widespread belief that a barren woman, who is not herself fertile, cannot induce fertility to seeds and the earth. This fertility rite is considered so infallible that even eunuchs and barren women will bear children if they participate in it.

Interpretation of the Ritual and Charm :

Let us now consider the belief underlying the ritual activities of the women. Let us note that all the ritual actions are performed by women exclusively.

At first a meeting of the villagers take a decision to celebrate the festival. A feeling of unity is created among the villagers by a unanimous decision of all the villagers. The representatives of all castes may also take a decision on behalf of the whole village.

The decision is announced by ths washerman. The belief underlying the choice of a man of a particular calling to announce the date of the festival appears to be the ritual purity for the function which can be caused by one who washes the clothes and make them pure. This assumption is strengthened by two other facts. It is the washerman who spreads wet cloth for the ritual procession of women to walk along to the place of the ritual. The women participating in the ritual wear clothes washed by the washerman.

The man, who is able to remove dirt from clothes and make them clean, may also purify the ritual site and the participants. We may presume that the role of the washerman is that of a purifier, bringing in an atmosphere of ritual purity for the occasion.

He solemnly announces the time of the ritual and implores women to bring ritual materials to the ritual site.

All these preparations are believed to bring a down pour of rain and a flood in the river This is an instance of belief in sympathetic magic.

There is nothing supernatural or symbolic in what the women bring for the ritual. They bring seeds, earth and manure. These, when combined suitably, can produce seedlings. The actual process of germination not being understood, they perform certain actions by which they believe, power of fertility can be Induced in the seeds, measure and the soil.

How do they attempt to produce induction of fertility in the objects that will cause germinations of seeds ? They perform certain actions which are believed to produce the desired result of germination.

They plant a pole.

They wash the hole in the pounding stone.

They pound the earth and manure it.

They spread it on the ground and spread

soaked seeds on it.

Then they raise a whistling sound (Kuravai). This whistling sound is raised by women on joyous occasions, (wedding or puberty ceremonies).

It is well-known to anthropologists that in the minds of the tribals and agricultural folks, there is an association between the process of human conception and childbirth on the one hand and the germination of seeds on the other.

African, Australian and Himalayan tribes believed that coitus near a field induced fertility to the field and catalysed the fertility-power of the seeds. The vedic people believed that productivity can be ensured by human sexual union in the fields.

B. N. Bhatracharya expresses the same view on the subject of association of human sexual activity with the process of germination.[3]

He has the following to say on the subject.

'So intimate appeared to be the relations between the process of birth and germination and those of the fertility in general that the two aspects of the same mystery found very similar modes of ritual expression under prehistoric conditions. Of such ritual expressions, the erotic rites are significant. To bring productivity under control, the primitive people attached supreme importance to the human generative organs and employed sexual union or its imitation to achieve this end'.

Though actual coitus as an aid to augment the fertility of the earth is known to be practised by a few isolated tribal communities, the civilised agricultural folks practise an imitation of it, a symbolic action as a substitute. In Bengal, in the rain-making and fertility ritual, a wooden linga is introduced into a wooden socket and manipulated just as the sexual organs in coitus as part of the ritual.[4]

Bearing in mind what has been said in the previous paragraphs, we may turn our attention to interpret the ritual actions of the women taking part in the rites.

The pounding of the earth and manure in the depression of the pouncing stone and the pestle are symbolic of human coitus. The linga and yoni are absent perhaps because the folks participating in the ritual are not saivites. The dominant section of the farmers in the villages are Kammavaru whose patron deity is Vishnu.

But the song does not mention the great gods. There is only one word in the song referring to a supernatural being that is Ammal, Mother. It is clear that it refers to the Mother Earth. But throughout the region where this particular form of ritual is prevalent, no Goddesses are installed for worship. Not even Ganesa or Gangamma has any place in the ritual. The water Goddess under the name of Gangamma is worshipped for producing rain by Telugu-speaking people in Tamil Nadu. But she is not present in this ritual.

What follows, leaves no doubt in the matter.

The charm song is merely a description of the development of the foetus in the womb of a human mother. It minutely describes how the foetus grows every month. This can easily be understood as a magical charm persuading the earth to imitate the human womb to help the seeds to grow in it.

This is an excellent instance of imitative magic

Now let us try to interpret the minor details of the ritual.

The women are asked to bring potsherds and not new pots. They are commanded to break them in the Vellala's grove; potsherds are parts of pots that have been used and discarded. They have proved their use fulness to the users and therefore will prove useful ritually

The women bring seeds in broken cocoanut shells. The cocoanut shell had contained the kernel and witnessed growth of the kernel within it. So its experience can be put to ritual use.

In essentials. the elements of the ritual do not vary very much from place to place in Tamil Nadu. These essentials are the expression of the belief in mutual induction of fertility.

Another Type of Fertility Ritual :

We shall now pass on to acquaint ourselves with another type of fertility ritual prevalent in Mysore region.

In Kallapura, a village in Mysore region, fertility rituals were observed in 1966 by Dr. Gurumoorthy, about which he reports in his doctoral thesis. On superficial observation, the ritual appears to be based on a belief quite different and even contradictory to the belief we just now found on interpreting the Tamil song. We shall see why it is so.

I shall quote from Dr. Gurumoorthy's thesis.

'This festival is celebrated on the ninth day of Ugadi, the Hindu New Year, according to Chandraman calendar.'

As a first step, the village God is taken in procession to the rivulet where the priest takes ritual bath under his supervision.

After returning from the rivulet, the God is seated in tho temple for eight days. During these days special pujas, bhajans and offerings are made to earn the favour of God. On the ninth day morning, the priest prepares the ritual material, cooked rice mixed with turmeric powder, pieces of cocoanut kernel, bilva patre, and so on and God bestows fertility power to it. The village god, followed by other minor gods of the village, leads the charagu-sprinkling party around the village along the ritual boundary. It is believed that with the walking of the God on the land, the evil spirits, which occupy the place will go away, and the ritual material is sprinkled on the land to get fertility. Until the ritual material is sprinkled, it is guarded by the villager, lest it should be stolen by outsiders. It is said that before the festival of the village God was started 32 years ago, there was a similar festival celebrated in honour of the Goddess Mari. During that occasion, charagu was prepared by mixing blood instead of turmeric powder, the flesh instead of coconut kernel, the ears, tongue and the tail tip of the (sacrificed) animal, instead of flowers and bilva patra. The festival, which was participated in mostly by the low castes, was stopped and the festival of the village God was started with the changes in ritual materials."

This account of a fertility rite is quite different from the one described in the Tamil folk-song.

A comparison of Fertility Rites :

Let us note the essential points of difference.

1. While in the folk-song, the ritual is exclusively feminine the processionists are women; the participants are women; those who pronounce the charm are women; while the participants in the Kallapura ritual are all men.

The grama devata is a male spirit in Kallapura. There is no spirit symbolised as an image in the rites.

In Neeravi Puduppatti materials for the ritual is brought by the women and the fertility material is prepared by them. In Kallapura, they are prepared by the priest.

The role of the priest is important in Kallapura, while there is no mention of a priest in the Tamil folk-song.

Let us compare the part of the ritual inducing fertility to the land.

In Kallapura ritual, food is cooked and mixed with turmeric and bilva patra. The activity of preparing the fertility belongs entirely to rhe priest who is a Lingayat Jangama. But in the song, the fertility material consists of seeds sown in pieces of earth mixed with cow and sheep-dung pounded together in a pounding stone. They themselves can produce a seedling in the natural course. The fertility rite is meant only as a catalyser to augment the fertility power of the natural objects.

In Kallapura, the priest probably chants a prayer. No prayer is chanted in song ritual. There is only a charm sung by the women in chorus, which tells the earth how foetus develops in the womb of its mother. It also says that the women who perform certain actions and sing this song will beget 16 children, the first of which will be a girl.

The chant is completely absent significantly from the rituals at Kallapura.

The presence of a priest and his important role in the proceedings, the non-participation of women in the activities, the absence of a chant by women are significant and fundamental differences between the two rituals.

The differences between the two are just the basic difference between 'religious belief' and 'magic ritual belief.

The world over, magic rituals relating to fertility are based upon,

1. The concept that the fertility power of woman and earth are mutually reactive.

2. The process of conception and the process of germination are almost identical.

3. These processes can mutually influence each other.

4. Menstrual blood and lochial blood, considered by the tribal folks as 'liquid life' can produce or stimulate life. Symbolically red colour is benefitably used in fertility rituals.[5]

5. Thurston has reported a case of human sacrifice, remarking that the basis for the practice was the belief that human blood shed on earth will fertilise it.

6. Animal and human sacrifice formed an inevitable part of fertility rites of tribal and civilised folk based on the above belief about blood.

The account about Kallapura ritual appears to upset the universal generalisations of fertility ritual.

But the description of the ritual itself gives a clue to a former ritual, stopped thirtytwo years before observations were recorded (1966) by the anthropologist. We shall start from this clue and solve the problem of difference in the actual rituals and the beliefs that might have inspired them.

The observer says, 'It is said that before the festival of the village God was started 32 years ago, there was a similar festival which was celebrated in honour of Mari'.

We know that Mari, the folk-Goddess[6] is indentified as Earth, the Mother Goddess and scourge Goddess of smallpox. She could both create and destroy life. She is essentially a folk-Goddess.

If Mari was the presiding deity of fertility festival, what was the fertility material distributed to the worshippers ?

The observer answers this question :

'During this occasion, charagu was prepared by mixing the blood of the sacrificial animal instead of turmeric powder, the flesh instead of kernel, the ears, tail-tip and tongue of the animal instead of flowers and bilva patra. This festival, which was participated in by the low castes, was stopped and the festival of the village God was started with changes in preparing the ritual material'.

Unfortunately the investigator has not recorded in detail how the old ritual had been performed. Yet we are in a position to know details of the transformation of the old cult, in which animals were sacrificed and blood was mixed with cooked rice for preparing charagu. Purely vegetarian charagu is cooked food, mixed with turmeric powder and bilvapatre.

Who could have suppressed the old cult and introduced a new one ?

In describing the caste distribution of the village, the investigator gives the information that Lingayat Gowdas were the dominant land-owners, They were Veerasaivaites who ate purely vegetarian diet. They believed in the monotheistic Veerasaiva religion. The almighty Siva was symbolised in linga which they worshipped. They discouraged or supplanted the worship of female deities and introduced worship of linga or Veerabadhra image in the ritual.

It was done in the case of Kallapura in very recent times. The low castes performed their own fertility cult in which Mari the earth Goddess was worshipped. They discouraged or supplanted the worship of female deities and introduced worship of linga or Veerabadhra image in the ritual.

The belief of the fertilising power of blood found expression in animal sacrifice. Blood was mixed with food in preparing the fertilising material.

The replacement of a Goddess by a God, and blood and flesh of sacrificial animals as fertility materials by flowers and bilva patre indicated that the initiators of the change worshiped a Father God (Siva) and were vegetarians, who abhorred animal sacrifice and the Goddess-worship.

The red colour of the blood was substituted by the yellow of the turmeric powder.

The patrilinear Gowdas abolished the custom of symbolic female dominance in the ritual.

Here is a clear instance of the dominant land-ownlng group abolishing the ritual or religious practices of the labouring folks dependen upon them and imposing their own beliefs on them. The old ritual itself, or fertility rite was incorporated with the Yugadi festival which is celebrated as a harvest festival in South India.

The 'low castes' still celebrate the fertility rites before the sowing season in Tamil Nadu in much the same way as they are described in the folk-song. We shall be curious to know whether separate independent fertility festivals are prevalent among the low castes in Kannada-speaking areas.

Whether survivals of female dominance are indicated in such rituals ?

Whether the induction principle exists as a belief in their rituals ?

Evidence is lacking to give the answer in the affirmative. Certainly various forms of fertility rituals have to be brought to light and analysed both in its geographical distribution and in its historical evolution horizontally and vertically. Such an investlgation will yield rich rewards to the cultural authropologist and to the folklorist.

In an interview with the investigation of the fertility rituals prevalent in Mysore area, he informed me that the reason for substitution of Mariamma by a God was the following. The landlords, the village headman and the leaders of the village lived in the centre of the village. They were the original inhabitants of Kallapura. Fallow lands around the old settlements were brought under cultivation with the aid of Vaggligaru, peasants of lower ritual status. They also appropriated land lying out side the inner circle of lands owned by the dominent original inhabitants called Gowdas. The untouchables, who constituted the labouring population, lived outside the last ritual circle and worshipped the village devata, Mariamma. The whole village worshipped the Goddess as Mother and fertiiity Goddess with animal sacrifices till 1934. The Gowdas being Lingayats wanted to put an end to the abominable blood sacrifices and the entry of the untouchables to the centre of

the village. So they introduced a new Gramadevata which brought by a Gowda who migrated from a neighbouring village. The immigrant God is Veerabadhra, son of Siva, who was born out of a spark of Siva's forehead eye. The new God having been brought by a Gowda, who was related to the leaders of the village, was called the Brother of Mahadeva. After this, worship began in 1934; the main annual festival was celebrated in his honour, The old custom of worship fell into disuse. The old temple of Mariamma was neglected and finally reduced to a heap of stones.

He asserts that the old cult is still prevalent the untouchables living in the cheries in the external ritual circle of the village.

So the villagers, who are attached to land through their labour still perform the old rituals to the Mother Goddess, linging to the faith that propitiation of the Goddess will produce fertility.

The case history of a sample cited above and many other recent changes in the sex of the fertility deity point to a concomittance between the ideal status of the fertility and Mother Goddesses and the status of women or at least a survival of the dominance of women in folk memory.

Conclusions :

Concentrating on the essentials of the different rituals of fertility, we may arrive at the following conclusion.

Where the fertility rituals are performed by the working folks, the fertility ritual is based on the belief in imitative and contagious magic. The ritual is only a catalyser to the natural process of germination. The contagious magic ritual is again based on the fertility induction theory. Blood, women's patticipation and actual materials required for germination are all used in the ritual performance. In this type of ritual the intervention of supernatural deities does not play any role.

Where the fertility rite is participated in by both land-owning groups and also agricultural labourers, the folk Goddess is the main

benefactor; but magic belief is not given up. Religion reinforces magic in the belief of the performers.

When the landowners dominate the ritual performance, magic rites and worship of the folk Goddess is completely suppressed and replaced by a God of the elite and Jangama or priest is introduced to play a leading role in worship. The folk goddess occupies a subordinate position in the worship, if she is given any importance at all.

The collective folk-magical ritual or collective worship of the folk Goddess is given up and even suppressed in favour of a superior god whose worship is performed by an ordained priest.

The existing forms of fertility rituals point to an evolution, from collective magical ritual participated in by women to that of a worship of Vinayaka or Veerabadhra, unnatural sons of Siva, who were acceptable as minor Gods to the monotheistic Saiva or Lingayat landlords, who constitute a major land-owning class in South India.

At present all the three forms of fertility rituals are prevalent in South India.

But due to the enlightening influence of education, new scientific methods are rapidly being introduced in agriculture. The old beliefs are disappearing as our folks, especially rural youth, obtain scientific knowledge of the natural process of germination and pregnancy. Science education demolishes magical and religious beliefs based on primitive myths and legends. Fertility rituals have lost their significance to our rural youth. Still the illiterate folks of the previous generation believe in the ideas behind the rituals. The rituals are meaningful to the old folks, and for the youth a meaningless routine in deference to the belief of their elders, Surely the old beliefs and mythical rationale which form the foundation for agricultural rituals are on their way out- thanks to the spread of scientific education and modern technological advances in the field of agriculture. The rituals are losing the essence of faith. They are merely observed as formal rituals wherever the youth get opportunities for formal schooling.

Without the basic foundation of faith, they are being transformed into secular festivals to infuse collective spirit and enthusiasm for labour and optimism necessary to start agricultural season.

Foodnotes to the Chapter on 'Women and Fertility'

1. Auvaiyar : Collected Poems (Thani-p-padalgal)
2. Thirumangai Alwar : 'Kaveri is Holier than Ganga'

   KURAVAI : 'kuravai koothu' is referred to in the Sangham literature of Tamil as a dance of the mountain tribes performed with the aim of increasing the fertility of the soil. In Cilappadikaaram it is accompanied by a song of prayer to Aiyai. In modern times bodily movements have been shed, only a whistling sound remains. This sound is made by women by pouting the lips and letting out deep-throated guttural sound of a high pitch. This whistling is usually made on happy occasions.

3 & 4. B. N. Bhattacharya : 'Indian Mother Goddess' Manushya Granthalaya, Calcutta.

5. Thomson quoted in 'Indian Mother Goddess' above
6. E. Thruston 'Ethnographic notes on South India', Part II pages 510-519.
7. 'Sri Lalitha Sahasranama', Section beginning with MA
8. Dr. Gurumurthy, Department of Anthropology, Karnataka University, Dharwar.

Women in Folklore : Chapter Summary

Though women deities have been worshipped in ancient civilizations (more so in India) the actual social position is a far cry from one of veneration. It is shown in this chapter that women as folk live by a much more rigorous code of conduct than men. Their creativity in the form of lullabies or labour songs or community songs reflects the restricted realm of action to which their life is tethered. As we see down the caste or class-scale, we find women enjoying a relatively higher degree of freedom, only

because women of lower strata are engaged in economically productive labour. This freedom, curiously blended with restrictions, comes out in the various roles women perform in the society. Nine of these roles have been illustrated in this chapter with examples. These roles are; love partner, wife, member of family, mother, worker, member of the extended clan or society, widow, plantation worker, agricultural labourer.

WOMEN IN FOLKLORE

HEADINGS

1. Anthropomorphic view of life of the ancients
2. Deities related to agriculture were goddesses : Mother goddesses of different civilizations
3. Folk conceptions of women
4. Woman in elite society : her training; attitude to husband and father; lover status; widowhood
5. The social position of agricultural labourer and other working women

   Wage-earners (comparatively high status) with comparative freedom in marriage
6. The life-cycle of women as seen in folk-songs :

   a. Love-partner
   b. Wife
   c. Member of family
   d. Mother
   e. Worker
   f. Member of the society with her rights and obligations.
   g. Widow
   h. Worker in plantations alienated from natural rural environment.
   i. Agricultural labourer

WOMEN IN FOLKLORE

The mode of material life of people determines their spiritual consciousness. Spiritual consciousness includes their beliefs, their rationale for natural events and processes and relation of man to the forces beyond him and existing independent of his will. The basis of life is the particular method of obtaining the means of subsistence in a society, in a particular epoch in history. The contribution of men or women towards the subsistence of the family and society determines their position and status in it. Whether women or men will have dominance in social life, depends upon the relative importance of their contribution to the material means of subsistence.

All over the world, the deities related to fertility and agriculture were Goddesses. The earth was also considered as mother Goddess by the ancient peoples.[1]

The names of a few Mother Goddesses and the ancient civilisation in which they were worshipped are given below :

MOTHER GODDESS		CIVILISATION
Nerthius	-	Teutons
Terram Matrem	-	Germans
Terra Mater Cos Mater Telius	-	Romans
Giantess Jordh	-	Teutons
Danu	-	Celts
Akka	-	Finns
Bhu	-	Indians
Goddess in Seal	-	Mohanjadaro[2]

Starbruck says : "Female deities have often enjoyed the highest place among Gods. This depends upon the place women in social organisation of the clean life in which the mother was the *head of the group. Comparative superiority of Goddesses over Gods* is a sure indication of the dominant position women occupied in ancient agricultural societies."[3]

Thomson and Gordon Child have pointed out that in ancient agricultural societies, property was handed down through matrilinear inheritance.[4]

G. Thomson has showed that mother dominance yielded place to father dominance, at a certain stage of development of ancient societies, wherever garden tillage was transformed into field tillage.

Such changes in methods of farming due to the development of technology led to transfer of farm work from women to men. Thomson concludes : 'Ever-shifting tensions correspond to gradual transition of matrilinear to patrilinear descent'.

But how did women lose their dominant position and came to occupy a subordinate position in society? From primitive agriculture, mankind developed cattle rearing, and irrigated agriculture. This development brought in a rêversal of the status of the sexes. Taming of animals-rearing of cattle and ploughing with the cattle-drawn *plough were exclusively man's work. Much of socially* necessary labour was performed by men. His labour produced more grain and goods for the consumption of society than the labour of women, The alternation of the importance of work, men and women performed, caused a reversal in status for men and women. This change did not occur peacefully, both the sexes sitting round a table and signing an agreement. The change was brought about by violent struggles in which matriarchal communities and patriarchal communities fought life and death battles in prehistoric times. These struggles are symbolically represented in 'Purana' like Shakti Purana, Devi Mahatmya and in ballads about Goddesses 'Kali or Amman'[5]. In the mythology of Babylonia and Assyria, the rule of the Mother Goddess was ended by Mardock killing her and creating the universe with parts of her body. The

Gods formed an assembly and Mardock was made the first God Emperor of the Universe. Mythology being a fantastic reflection of history in the minds of people preserved by folk-memory; it is possible to infer that the clashes between Father Gods and Mother Goddesses refer only to violent battles between mother-dominent societies and father-dominant societies at a point of time when a revolutionary change in the mode of production appeared on the stage of society. The victory of the patriarchal communities resulted in the degradation of women and the concept of superiority of women turned into its opposite. Woman began to be considered a possession of man, just like his cattle. She was reviled as the inspirer of everything evil. Menstruating women were considered impure and taboos were imposed on her. While in the days of their glory in matriarchal form of social life, their period of menstruation was considered a period, when they could induce fertility, in patriarchal society, she was believed to cause withering of plants if she approached them. Thus the reversal of status was complete.[5]

Our aim in this section is to construct an image of folk-women from songs. It will not be possible without a knowledge of their social and family status. Sociological observations to and folk-songs themselves yield data that can be combined to construct the image of folk-women in social life. The lowest level of life is that of the agricultural labourers, mostly consisting of landless untouchables. The next higher level of life is that of the poor peasant of different castes owning a bit of land and working on his own land. The third level is that of the rich peasant belonging te intermediate castes below the Brahmin and the Vellala, the traditional land-owning castes. The women of the three levels work on land. The women of the lowest folk level, though economically poor, live a free life, because they have to work side by side with men and earn independent income. They have right of divorce and remarriage after dissolution of marriage or after the death of the husband. On the higher levels, the women are not so poor as their sisters in the last level, but are comparatively less free. Though chained by caste, sex, and caste-work rules, the women belonging to the last level of folk-life can challenge the restrictions to a limited extent. Folk-life is always a life of labour in modern Indian society. The

image then has to be that of working women in all levels of folk-life, both in their roles in family and social life.

The women belonging to the land-owning or wealthy merchant families have no independent socio-economic role, because they are not engaged in productive labour. Their labour is confined to domestic chores. Men are economically dominant, because they own property and earn incomes. The woman in family and social life occupies a lower status than man. She is taught to obey her parents. Marriage is held up before a girl as the highest ideal of a woman's life. The idea that a woman's husband is her God is dinned into her head since childhood.

In an article in Stri Dharma in November 1928, Miss Mayo wrote : [8]

'Having seen her elder sister return home after a severe beating by her husband, the younger sister asks her grandmother whether she must go back to her husband. The grandmother gives the following profound advice to her granddaughter'.

"There is no other god on earth for a woman than her husband. The most excellent of all the good works she can do is to seek to please him by manifesting perfect obedience to him. Let his defects be what they may, let his wickedness be what it may, a wife should always look upon him as God. If her husband abuses her grossly, she shall take hold of his hands, kiss them, and beg his pardon. Let all her words and actions give public proof that she looks upon him as God".

This can be summed up in a proverb which is a rehash from Manu's verse about the position of woman in the family.

"KALLANALUM KANAVAN"

(Even if a stone is called husband, the woman must consider it God)

"The woman is a shadow of her father, when she is a maid, that of her husband in married life and the servant of her sons, when she becomes a widow".

The folk-woman has generally an independent economic status, because of her productive labour. Therefore her status in family and society is relatively free.

After the husband's life, she has no independent role.

Thus, she has no right to freedom of action throughout her life. The position of women of the artisan classes is no different. In these classes only men ply their trade; the women keeping home for them. They share the lot of the ladies of the wealthier classes accepting the position of housewives, who have no say or they only play a subordinate role to their menfolk. So Manu's dictum holds good to all women who have no independent economic status.

The Social Position of the Agricultural Labourers and Other Rural Working Women

The agricultural labourers in the Dravidian regions, mainly belong to the Palla and Paraya communities of Tamil Nadu, the Holeya of Karnataka, the Pulaya of Kerala and Male of Andhra who are the so-called untouchables, renamed Harijans by Mahatma Gandhi. They are traditional agricultural labourers, who do not own land, generally. During the course of the twentieth century, the poor peasantry has also been reduced to the state of agricultural labourers, who have nothing else to exchange for money except their labour-power. They belong to both sexes. Though wages are lower for women than for men for the same quality and quantity of work, certain types of work such as transplantation of paddy seedlings and weeding are entirely the monopoly of women. Thus they play a role in the economic support to their families. So also woman belonging to the weaver, potter, washerman and other castes do, where women assist their men in their work and earn income, though it be less than what their men earn. Though these women live with their husbands in his parent's home, the woman enjoys comparative freedom and can fight for just and reasonable treatment, when her husband or her in-laws treat her harshly. Divorce and remarrrage are also enjoyed by women of certain castes of the folks, though it may be regulated by rules or injunctions peculiar to each caste.

Such is the social background of women-folk in Tamil Nadu and other Dravidian linguistic areas. It will be reasonable to interpret folk-songs and other folk-creations in the light of the social being of women.

Let us consider in the following sections women in her different roles, keeping in mind differentiation engendered by social class position of the folk-women. We shall mainly try to describe woman's role as :

a) a love-partner

b) a wife

c) a member of the family

d) a mother

e) a worker

f) a member of the society with her rights and obligations

g) a widow

h) a worker in plantation alienated from her natural environment and

i) an agricultural labourer.

Love

LOVE is the predominant theme in folk-songs and folk-ballads. Premarital love is not very common among the elite group of the higher castes. Their freedom to love and choose the life-partner is limited by the belief in karma that, a girl's life with her husband is predetermined at the moment of her birth by fate. Thus a child who asks her grandmother whether it was desirable to send her sister to her husband's house where he had cruelly tortured her, gets the following reply from her.

'There is no other God for a women than her husband. The most excellent of the good works she does it to seek to please him by manifesting perfect obedience to him. Let his defects be what they say, let his wickedness be what it may, a wife should look upon her husband as her God.'

This God will be identified by her parents by the birth jataka of the bridgegroom and the ritu jataka of the bride. Her emotions and preferences are not a matter of importance in marriage. She learns love from epics and tales, Harikathas and Sivapuranas.

There is a proverb in all the South Dravidian languages expressing the idea.

"The field that one owns and the woman one marries are determined by fate." [11]

If a woman loves a man with a view to marriage, there are a thousand obstacles that tend to frustrate her wish.

The life of labour of the women of the working class, piaces them in the company of men in work-sites. The peasant and labourer-maidens go out to work with men to fields, plantations and dam-sites.

They have ample opportunities to know and observe the men who work alongside of them. Love sprouts in spite of serious restrictions of choice, based on caste, traditons, belief in karma and jataka and family feuds. The love that sprouts on the work-sites may rarely be consummated in marriage. Most otten it leads to tragic consequences. Love pines away when unfavourable rules of caste and class intervene, wrenching away the love-partners. Rarely the lovers dare to elope and marry and stand up against the granite wall of tradition, usage and belief.

The maid in love, as pictured by the songs, behaves with restrain and responsibility, never allowing the lover to cross the limits. She always desires to make courtship, a prelude to the permanent union in marriage. Here are a few examples that illustrate the self-restraint of the maid, when her lover expresses suggestively his desire to have sexual union with her.

Here is a conversation between a lover and the maid he loves.

Lover : *O ! Maid who carries a mud-pot, place it on the ground and name the price for your two women-pots.*

Girl : *If the mud-pot gets broken, another pot can be bought, If the woman-pot is broken what will the world say ?*

A lover attempts to pick up conversation with his girl friend. She has been asking him to go to her father and request him to give her in marriage to him. Since he had not paid heed to her requests, she wanted to persuade him in a light manner to direct his efforts to go and ask her father. I give below a folk-song in which a conversation between the lover and the maid is narrated.

Lover : O ! Maid, you draw water with a long rope beating rythm with your feet. Will it be unpleasant for you to quench my thirst ?

Maid : I shall certainly quench your thirst. If you come to the raised platform (Marriage alter) before my house, I shall give you cool water to quench your thirst.

Lover : *I don't know where the platform is. I do* not know the shady road which leads to that platform in front of your house. If you tell me the route to the altar, I shall come to that place.

Maid : The *platform* will be *adorned* with palm leaves cut in the shape of fish. It will be adorned with ornamental paintings. The roof will be thatched with palm leaves.

It is the holy marriage alter[12]

When the period of courtship is unusually long, the maid expresses her feelings of anxiety and fear that her parents may find and fix an auspicious day for her marriage with a stranger. She attempts to persuade her lover to make the bonds of love more enduring and happy by marrying her soon.

" My Indra ! My God ! when will you pass this way ? Will he pass this way ? Shall I munch betel leaves to make my mouth red ? Shall my body emanate a fragrant smell ? (to attract you)"

" I ascended up a fort well. I plucked a ripe mango fruit, But I did not taste the fruit. I am like a flower - - like a withered flower in a casket. I am shut up in my house. When will you come bringing paddy and plaintains and cocoanut fruit to become my inseparable companion ?

As a love-partner, the young woman is portrayed as a peer to the young man in the depth of her emotions. But she desires to translate premarital passions into socially sanctioned married happiness along with all its social responsibilities.

Any folk-song anthology will contain numerous songs of love and the problems the folk-lovers face in the unfavourable social environment and belief system of the elders. Though the youth knows perfectly well that most of the love affairs vapourise in the cold atmosphere of the caste-ridden social environment, love continues to struggle against icy cold weather and now and then manages to survive. It can survive only in cases when both the lovers, take courage to elope when the parents and caste leadership disapprove of their getting married.

ELOPEMENT

The picture of a woman as love-partner will not be complete without mentioning the constancy of lovers, who transmount all social and caste barriers and elope to find a home in a far off village trusting to their limbs with which they can work and to their mutual love which is their insurance to happiness. Such elopements are on the increase due to the changed social values engendered by the emergence of new settlements in dam-sites, new industrial townships and in other states where the particular caste structure in their own parts of the country is not prevalent.

In songs about elopement of the lovers, who belong to different castes, or differ in socio-economic status, love and courage

cuts across all such barriers. They decide to leave their parental homes and find a new home far away from their native village.

A folk-song describes the life of a young man and woman who had eloped and settled down after marriage as gang-labourers for laying a road.

Wife : You are handsome as a lotus flower. Your eyes are black as a cloud. I am charmed with your good looks.

Husband : You cooked your food on the palm of your hand; before you joined me who granted you the good fortune to cook in a metal pot ?

Wife : I paid wages (to workers) in pearls. I followed you for your good character. It is for your sweet nature that I left my home and followed you.[14]

The taunt in the husband's words is that she was poor, and her marriage with him had raised her economic status, she had no vessels to cook before she married him and after her marriage with him, she began cooking in metalic vessels. She replies that she, did not care for his money, but was attracted by his 'sweet nature "and" good character'.

FAILURE OF LOVE-AFFAIRS

Inter-caste marriages being rare, and arranged marriages being the rule, premarital love,-affairs very often prove unsuccesful. Then the disappointed young woman or young man expresses her or his feelings of despair in songs laden with tears. The following is an example.

Woman : We were united in love like hair in a pretty bobi like a stork picking up a fish from water. Our bonds are broken. I no more wear washed clothes. I no more munch betel leaves.

After my lover left me, I forgot to dring rice-gruel I cleaned a glass cup and planted a rose plant in it. The petals now lie withered in the cup. Two doves pocked corn in a - maize field when one of them flew away. The other pined away in tears.

DOWRY AND BRIDE-PRICE

Economic considerations, in contracting marriage, bring sorrow and suffering to the young married couple. It mars their happiness and even leads to dissolution of marriage and permanent separation. In an acquisitive society, where the main consideration is money-value, the working folk, who don't possess much in the world, begin to imitate their betters.

A bride's father promised to present a gold ring to his son-in-law at the time of marriage. After the wedding expenses, he was left with no money to buy a ring. He could not present the ring he promised to his son-in-law. The daughter went to live in her father-in-law's house. The father-in-law taunted her with the broken promise of the girl's father. All in tears she prostrated before her father-in-law and begged him to forgive her and treat her as a daughter, forgetting her father's default. A folk-song narrates their conversation.

Father-in-law : Your father paid three-hundred as dowry. He boasted that he was a rich landlord and he would present a gold ring. My snn weeps for the last three days asking for the gold ring.

Daughter-in-law : Don't taunt me with the low dowry. You need not invite my parents to any feast. I am the daughter of poor parents. Accept me as I am, a poor girl, my father-in-law.

Then the bridegroom chimes in : Your inside is all crooked, Your back Is bent, You are an unlucky hunchback Is it for your beauty I married you ?

The other side of the coin is the bride-price. A folk-song mentions bride-price, received by the bride's father for his daughter, who could not cook food for her husband. She is abused by her husband for not being able to prepare even conjee (gruel) for him.

It was like buying a pair of oxen for high price, which could not plough the land. The husband teases his wife for not being able to do the primary duty of a wife, to cook well for her husband.

'Husband' : Your father received three-hundred rupees and tied it up in a knot in the corner of his cloth, shall I embrace your neck and weep, when I find you cannot cook conjee for me:[17]

Divorce :

In a large number of the lowest caste-groups, divorce is socially permitted on grounds of adultery and cruelty. Widow remarriage is also permitted. A few communities among the lower castes do not permit divorce on any grounds. (eg. Catholic Parava and Hindu Nadar)

The permission for divorce is considered by communities that do not permit it, as a criterion for the high status of a caste-group in the caste hierarchy. The rejection is on of the belief, that marriage is made in heaven or the hand of fate is implict in the permission for divorce. Their women enjoy more rights and liberties in married life than their sisters of the upper castes. ('Brahmin, Vellala, Mudaliyar, Naidu, Reddi or Gownda) The unofficial caste panchayat, can grant divorce to a couple. The following folk-song is an expression of the thoughts and feelings of a cruelly treated wife who decides to leave her husband.

> Crushing forest chillies, I prepared curry for him ; complaining that the curry is not tasty, he beats me closing the doors. I prepared mushroom curry. I prepared regi balls; complaining that the rice cold, he beats me with a stick. He knew I had a few years of schooling when he married me. He beats me breaking my waist, saying that I do not know how to prepare conjee. He was charmed with my complexion; he used to say that on pinching my arm, it became red at that spot. He now beats me saying that I do not know how to cook rice. I got married in a strange unknown village. "Don't beat me; don't pinch me, I shall quit tomorrow before dawn"[18]

This song gives the cruel treatment by the husband, as the ground for the intended separation of the wife from her husband. In such cases the art of cooking can be learned and the separation averted. There is another song in Tamil describing the reconcilation between a married couple, when the wife learns to cook well.

> Unable to bear the beating, she told everything to her father. Her father brought plenty of vegetables. She did not know how to slice them. She sent someone to her uncle for a slicing instrument. Her uncle brought one and sliced the vegetables. He wept, learning her tale of sorrow. She began to cook. She began to cook. She fried and she cooked.

Muthamma (the wife) cooked rice :
He, the husband set and hummed a song
inhaling the odour or food
She fried 'appalam' in 'ghee'
Wearing a silk saree, she bent over his
leaf and served rice and curry.
Well-pleased he devoured not only food but also
her whole body with his eyes - "Praise her,
ye all women, Sing her praise, ye all women."[19]

The folk-poet calls upon all women to praise Muthammal and follow her example. But there are a few men who are incorrigibly wicked and cruel. Nothing pleases them. Perhaps he has an eye on another girl belonging to a comparatively rich family, whom he could marry without a bride-price if he gets rid of his first wife. She might bring a plot of land with her. In such circumstances, the wife had no alternative but to leave him forever. But she would not leave guietly without telling everyone in the village, how he had treated her, so that noone would willingly offer one's daughter in marriage to him. She wants to wreak vengence upon him in return for his cruel treatment of her and his treacherous wish to marry a second wife.

Wife : The unhusked paddy is in the stone husker. The polished rice is in the 'muram'. You mama, who spoke ill of cooked rice, here is your secred thali, take it.

Husband : I won't take the holy thali;
I won't take even if you give me a substitute wife,

Come to the village court,
With thirty pieces of silver tied in the corner or your saree.

Wife : I won't come to the village court,
Even if you drag me there,
I won't come ;
You, who spoke ill of cooked rice,
Take this, your thali.[20]

The wife's words reveal an occasional revolt against the belief male-supremacy in the rural society. The wife accuses him of a breach of the rule, that no one should speak ill of cooked rice, which is expressed in *proverbs in Tamil and Malayalam.*

"One who blames cooked rice will lose it all his life".

JOINT FAMILY

Patriarchal joint family has been the main mode of family organisation both in elite and folk communal life in all Dravidian regions, except Kerala. In Kerala too, there is a matrilinear joint-family system known as Tharawad. In Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra, the joint-family system was patrilinear. In these three regions, the landed gentry desired to preserve large land-holdings as joint property. The peasantry also followed this system to utilise the total labour availability of the members of their families. Thanks to the mobility of educated youth, this system is breaking down. The laws on land reform also contributed to the automisation of joint-families. Among the agricultural labourer, the joint-family system is a vanishing institution, due to a variety of

reasons; drought, famine and new openings for jobs in dam-sites, road building works and in mills and factories. The rising trend is at present the nuclear family. In Kerala, too the Tharawad system has almost disappeared, because of the spread of education among all sections of the population, mobility caused by it and loss of land-ownership by the traditional land-owning communities due to land reforms and other reasons.

To sum up the situation of the joint-family in the words of Mandelbaum.

"The common ideal is that of filial and fraternal solidarity, which prescribes that brothers should remain together in the parental household after they marry, sharing in one purse and in common property, helping each other according to need and each giving according to his best abilities ... ..."

Indian village society is patrilineal and virilocal, except for a few matrilineal groups notably the Nairs of Kerala.

This ideal of filial solidarity has been reinforced by being built into the chief text-book of Hindu Law, the Mitakshara of twelth century. Under this code, the male is entitled to an equal share in property from the moment of his birth; and hence all the brothers are coparceners, each entitled to an equal share of what his father and brothers have. Joint-ownership is assumed by law and the assumption usually implies, though it does not require, joint residence and joint social and economic activities. (G. Desai, 1955-Mandelbaum 1948). Women, whether in the status of daughter, wife or widow, are entitled to maintenance by their male kin, but under the ancient law they had no other vested interest in the family property ... ...

This kind of family; cannot go on indefinitely there are both physical and social limitations to its continuance. If son after son, keeps on adding wives and children, there is a physical limit to the number that can be fed and housed in one household. The fission of the larger family is an inevitable step in the cycle of domestic development.

Despite many advantages, centrifugal forces inevitably build up, so that every family sooner or later breaches the ideal. Among the very poor, the breach typically comes not long after the new bride is brought into the family. Early separation also occurs among families at the other end of the economic scale and those with men in modern professions. Those families who own lands are likely to keep the ideal pattern (joint-family) much longer".

Folk-life is rapidly changing due to changes in land-ownership and migration of the younger generation to towns to seek urbanemployment.

THE WIFE AND HERIN-LAWS

In a joint-family, the wives of younger male members are always constrained to be content with an inferior position in the family hierarchy. In a joint-family of the poor peasant households, the mother-in-law, sisters-in-law, wives of brothers-in-law conspire to make the young wife's life unhappy. They all expect her to obey them and never to do anything independently.

There is no love lost between her and her-in-laws. At least according to folk-songs in Tamil and Kannada, the husband loves her. But that is no solace to the wife. He will be accused as an unfaithful son of the family, if he supports her against his mother or sisters-in-law. He is branded as a henpecked husband.

In a folk-song in Tamil, the feelings of a hard-working young wife and her wish that all her-in-laws who block everyone of her efforts to save a little money, should all die are openly expressed :

> Our land is good. My husband is good. The monkey that gave birth to him-she is the source of all trouble. The earth is good. My husband is good. The mountain monkey that gave birth to him-she is the source of all my troubles.
>
> On the river bank, I left two goats that I had bought, to grow. My sisters-in-law should die if the goats should grow.

I left two hens on the tank bund. For them to live and grow, my mother-in-law must die.

I left two cows tied to a pole. For them to live and give milk, my father-in-law should die.[22]

I have already said that the young wife desires to put by something for the rainy day. But her efforts are frustrated by her-in-laws. That is why she curses them and wishes for their death.

WOMAN AS MOTHER

"Between mother and son, there is everywhere in India a strong, tender, unchangeable, dependable bond. The bond is celebrated in sacred writing, romanticised in popular tale and upheld in the actuality of popular tale. A mother is respected; motherhood is revered. The sons give abundantly of both the tokens and substance of esteem. She is not the aloof person, a father is supposed to be. She is everlastingly living and earning, certainly in ideal, often in reality".

The mother is held in high esteem in the folklore of all the South Dravidian languages. The woman is exalted as the highest shrine of worship in the proverbs like.

"There is no temple holier than the mother."
(Thayir ciranda koil illai) Tamil

"There is no Goddess greater than mother"
("Thali kande oka deivamu lethu") Telugu

The children take after their mother just as the quality of a cloth depends upon the quality of yarn (of which it (is made

("Thayaipole pillai nulaippole chelai") Tamil

("Thalla vali pillai; thana vali vellam") Malayalam

("Thayin ante magalu, nulin ante ceere") Kannada

("Thallina poli bitta; nulunu polina gutta") Telugu

Though the folklore of all the Dravidian languages values highly the mother as the greatest Goddess, whom the sons should worship, she is assigned only a subordinate status; that is her lot in a joint-family while her father or husband is alive. This attitude to to women is expressed in the folk-wisdom of the proverbs.

WOMEN'S INTELLIGENCE LAGS BEHIND (that of men)

'Penn buddhi pin buddhi' (Tamil)

'Penn buddhi pin buddhi' (Malayalam)

''Adu thani buddhi apara buddhi' (Telugu)

WOMEN'S INTELLIGENCE IS LOW :

"Pennin buddhi manakala kelathe" (Kannada)

Proverbs warn the husband not to be led by the wife, who will cause ruin to wealth and family.

'Pennchati Pechaikkettavan pei pola alaivan'. (Tamil)

A man who follows the advice of his wife
will wander like a ghost.

'Penn chollu ketkunnavan peruvali'. (Malayalam)

A man who follows a woman's advice will wander
along the high-ways, (He will lose all his wealth.)

It is clear from the comparison of the first set of proverbs with the second, that though women as a whole are considered unequal to men in intelligence and ability, the mother must be revered as the highest goddess by a son.

The reverence for the mother is a value that arises from the dominance of mother in matrilinear conditions of Kerala, that lasted till very recent times.

'The position of the mother among Nairs is very high, though matriarchy and 'Marummakkathayam' are things of the past. In every Nair family, it is Amma Vilayattam (the play of the mother). She occupies a dignified and honourable position. She governs the house. The following remark of a missionary, Samuel Mateer

still holds good". In the family of the Nairs, she governs the whole house, often a large one, consisting of 20 to 30 persons, provides for the wants of each, settles all disputes, rules over even her grown-up sons, who never in public sit down in her presence, but stand humbly behind her chair."

"Polyandry among Nair women did not dishonour or lower them in esteem. Though children belonged to several fathers, their love and affection for their mother is unequivocal".

Monogamy and patrilinear system of inheritance are prevalent in other parts of the Dravidian region. The struggle between matriarchy and patriarchy that raged in the whole of South India and Bengal is reflected in Siva Shakthi conflict in legends, puranas and folklore. But in all states including Kerala, the mother is loved and honoured, because of her role in rearing up children and passing on the traditional cultural heritage to them. That is why the proverb, 'The children take after their mother, just as the quality of a cloth depends upon the quality of the yarn' is current in most of the languages of Iindia. Whatever be her status in the family heirarchy, the mother's role as protector andeacher of her children and as an everlasting fountain of love is recognised in folklore.

One example of the folk-attitude to the mother is found in the story of Renuks, wife of Jamadagni and mother of Parasurama (in Karnataka). Suspecting her fidelity, the father asked his son to kill her. He obeyed his father's command without hesitation. Much pleased with his son's obedience, the father asked him to name a reward. Parasurama asked that his mother be revived. The puranas extol the high sense of duty of the son. But the folks consider Parasurama as a wicked son who killed his own mother. To this attitude of Parasurama, folk-ballads describe his childhood as a rebellious child having no consideration for his mother's feelings. He was an unfeeling tool in the hands of his jealous father, who wanted to kill her, because he suspected her idelity to him.

Folk-ballads in Kannada, describe Renuka as the abandoned sweetheart of Jamadagni, who lived with her for sometime and left for tapas without talking leave of her. After his return from tapas,

he became suspicious of his sweetheart's fidelity. But the folks worship her as Yallamma (mother of all)[25]

Lullaby - Mother's Creation.

Lullaby is a universal type of folk-song having both a cause and a function. A fewfolklorists in Tamil Nadu consider lullabies as nothing more than nonsense rhymes, interspersed with a few verbal and nonce formulae. A lullaby means no more to them than a few meaningless cluster of sounds arranged to a particular rhythm with a view to produce sleep in children. It has only a function.

Indian lullabies in general and Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada lullabies and even Kota and Badaga, tribal lullabies in particular are not only charged with maternal emotion, but bring material for analysis for the social anthropologist.

Though the emotion of mothers all over the world is identical the expression of the feeling differs according to different social milieu and environment in which they had grown up. Thus the lullabies sung by a wealthy mother or a poor mother differs from each other in imagery and content, though they express the same instinctive love of a mother to her child.

How can this basic difference be explained ?

Except in Kerala, the society has been patrilinear from very ancient times, the birth of a son, the heir to the property of the father is welcomed with joy by mothers of wealthy families. On the contrary, the birth of a girl does not evoke so much rejoicing.

The baby boy is hyperbolically praised in a thousand lullabies. The mother happily foresees his glorious future. If it be a baby-girl that is born, the lullaby muse turns dumb. In the case of baby-girls born in working class families, they are burdened with advice. Even the boys are not foretold a glorious future, because mothers cannot forget that their lot in life will be hard. We shall make a study in contrast of the thoughts, feelings, hopes and expectations of a mother of a wealthy family with those of a mother of a poor family in the lullabies they sing to their baby-sons (Tamil lullaby songs).

A lullaby, sung by the mother of a child born in a wealthy family, reveals what hope she cherishes about the future of her baby-son.

Are you the grandson of the wealthy lord
whose lands are fertilised by mango fruits
and watered with honey ?

Are you the son of the prosperous lord
who rides in a silver chariot
drawn by cloud like bullocks ?

Are you the heir to the Kingdom of Madurai
measuring three kothas ?

Are you the heir born to rule over eighteen kingdoms ?

Are you the heir born to extend the eighteen kingdoms
to fifty-six ?[26]

One will not fail to note rhe pride of the mother in her son, as the heir to a vast property. She praises her father-in-law who used to possess lands that were manured by mango fruits and watered by honey. Her fancy soars up to such height that she imagines her son as the future emperor over fifty-six kingdoms. The wealthy circumstances of her family permits her to indulge in fancy that her son will be a great Emperor. The motive is desire for enhancement of status.

Such exaggerated fancies and day-dreams are frequently met within Lalle songs in Telugu and jo-jo songs in Kannada. In Malayalam songs the wealth of the Tharawad, in which the mother has a share, is often referred to as the Kingdom of a Raja. The son is not called the grandson of a king ruling over eighteen kingdoms, but as the maternal nephew of a royal uncle. In Kerala, the child inherits the property of his uncle and not his paternal grandfather's as in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka or Andhra. Therefore his proud genealogy is traced to his wealthy uncles and grand parents on the mother's side. On the other hand, in patrilineal societies, the child's father and grandfather receive exaggerated

praise as Kings and Emperors. The highest aspiration of the landlord class is king-ship. They at least wish royal status for their baby-boys in their wildest day-dreams.

The thought-content of the lullabies sung by the poor women is in striking contrast to the thoughts and fancies of the wealthy mothers expressed in their lullabies. Let me give an instance.

> My beauty, with pearly smile and teeth like flower buds, why did you arrive in this empty cottage to play ? Did you come to this poor hut only to crawl on the damp floor ?
>
> The floor is rough and uneven; will it not hurt you if you crawl on it ? Why did you choose this cottage ? (to be born) Why did you not choose marble mansions with coral pillars ? While there are rich men who will bring you up in all comfort and luxury, why did you choose to be born of this poor woman, who eats cooked maize half the days of the year and goes on hungry stomach for the rest of the days ?
>
> If I wish to feed you with cow's milk, the cow does not give milk, because I cannot buy cotton seed to feed it. If I wish to feed you with goat's milk, there is no leaf on the creepers on the hedge, which have withered and gone dry. If I wish to feed you with breast milk, there is no milk, because I get nothing to eat and I have become lean and lanky as a monkey.
>
> While I work in the fields and leave you on the field-bunds, I toil as a helper to a mason and he scolds me very often. If the mason scolds me, will not your pretty face shrink in pain ?"[37]

The poor mother's lullabies in all the Dravidian languages contain similar emotions clothed in similar words.

I have mentioned the view of a few scholars that lullaby has only the function of producing sleep in the child. They quote

American or English lullabies to illustrate their statements. It is true that lullabies in all languages contain certain meaningless words, but lullabies in South Indian languages, just like the songs quoted above; are full of socialogical, anthropological, socio-psychological significance.

1. They touch the tender chord of maternal love a universal emotion.

2. They express the conditions of the life of the mother in the society, stratified by class division.

3. The mothers of wealthy families and poor families re-collect their lives in homes they were born, either happy or unhappy according as they are rich or poor.

4. The aspirations and hopes of the rich as well as the poor mother for the future of her children are antipodal.

5. These songs provide autobiographical recollections and reflections of women and their respective social roles.

6. The psychological changes in the mind of the mother caused by birth of a child are reflected in the lullabies,

The tender and sweet emotions of the mother towards her child had attracted great religious poets like Perialwar,[28] who had composed lullabies to Krishna, as if they are sung by his foster-mother Yasodha. There are literary lullabies in all South Indian literatures composed by great poets. Lullabies are an indis-pensable formula in the composition of ballads. It has universal attraction that has charmed Indian poets.

The literary lullabies of Perialwar have migrated to Mysore and Andhra region in its original Tamil form. Many Vaishnavite mothers used to sing it till very recent times, learning the poems in the script of their own languages and singing while rocking the cradle in which their own languages and singing while rocking the cradle in which their children are laid to sleep. Lullabies on Nammalwar are sung in Andhra. I came across a book in Kannada script, containing lullabies of Perialwar. Dr. Ramaraju of Osmania

University recited to me a lullaby of Perialwar which his mother had taught him when he was a child. He confessed that he did not know its meaning.

In my opinion, lullabies are most meaningful songs in folk-poetry and that is just the reason why they are introduced in literature by the greatest of our poets. Therefore they have both the function of inducing sleep and also evoking sweet emotions and thoughts in the minds of adults, who listen to them.

Even today lullabies are being composed by the dozen on goddesses great men like Gandhi, Nehru, Indra Gandhi, Kamaraj and Annadurai and sung from public platforms in Tamil Nadu. That points to a change of function. Our young mother in rural parts of Tamil Nadu still learn lullabies and sing them to their children, while in town lullabies are vanishing. In Karnataka lullabies are being sung by mothers, which preserve the tenderness and sweetness of the old Kannada songs.

I shall cite only example of a song sung in a village sixty miles south-east of Dharwar. I am indebted to Prof. Devendra Harkari for singing to me the song and explaining the meaning of it.

The baby is imagined to cry and the mother, to soothe him in order to put him to sleep.

> All of you ask me why my son cries, when I give him milk boiled and hot ?
>
> He cries saying that he wants cold milk.
>
> When I give him cold milk, he cries saying that he wants milk with cream.
>
> There is a town by name Amaravati.
>
> My son wants a parrot from that town.
>
> He devours too many sweets. When the stomach begins to ache, he cries.
>
> He is a troublesome creature; but is a hero like Veerabadhra.
>
> (Veerabadhra is the son of Siva, born from his third eye, when Siva wanted to destroy a troublesome demon)[28]

Barren Woman :

Motherhood, though not always a happy state for the poor mother, is still wished for, since barrenness is looked upon as the worst curse upon a woman.

The origin for a such a belief goes back to the primitive tribal life of man's social development.

The primary concern of the ancient peoples were offspring and food. In their state of primitiveness, the process of propagation and the process of nutrition acquired special significance. Using primitive forms of reasoning and analogy, they viewed natural productivity in terms human procreation and valued each human mother in terms of Earth Mother, Womenly nature is attributed to Mother Earth.

Biffault says, 'Identification of earth with woman pervades the thought in all stages of culture.' In Roman Jurisprudence we find, 'The mother and the soil are alike.'

In the mantras of marriage it is said, 'Your women are the fields.'

Quran says of the earth :

'Hail mighty mother of men.'

These quotations clearly point to the belief that process of producing vegetation and that of child-bearing are very much alike. Not only that. The fertility of earth can influence the fertility of the woman and vice versa.

Therefore a productive field and a fertile woman are looked upon as the most desirable possessions of a family in the folk-mind.

As a barren field is worthless, so also a barren woman is of no value to her family and society. Not merely that, she may pass on her sterility to plants and animals. There is another reason for the derision heaped upon a barren woman. This belief is closely similar to the belief in contagious black magic. She can radiate her sterility all around her. Her breath can cause crops to wither

and her touch can make cows barren. An example is instanced here. In folk-song a barren woman laments the evil curse of her barrenness. People despise her. Trees, plants and animals do not propagate, if she touches them.

1. In my street no woman is barren, except me. I drove a cow home, but hearing my voice it went dry. A cow and two buffaloes went dry (at my touch). I dug a pond on the way home. But cows and buffaloes refused to drink water from the tank, for I am under the curse of barrenness.

2. I am a barren woman, laughed at by my neighbours. Whatever I touch, loses the capacity to multiply. The buffalo calf is barren, because I fed it. The black cow is barren, because I tended it. The dog which is my pet is also barren. I dry up when I should bring forth fruit.[29] Women of my age are mothers of seven children.

An anthropological interpretation of this song brings to light the belief that barrenness is contagious.

The barren woman is treated as a despicable creature by other women.

These are the reasons that lead the woman to the conclusion that barrenness is a curse.

If the earth is barren, no seed that falls on it will germinate. Anything, which has the natural capacity to multiply, will lose that capacity. So also the woman will pass on her barrenness, a curse, to all plants and animals when she touches them. Her barrenness can be radiated even through the air.

Such belief is largely held by women throughout India. What is the material basis for this belief ? This belief is a conscious mental superstructure based on the economic basis. The woman will have no security after her husband's death, if she brings forth no son. The inheritance being patrilinear, she will have no claim on her husband's property if she is childless. This feeling of insecurity for her future, makes her absorb the beliefs prevalent in her society,

about fertility and barrenness. She longs for children, specially a son and performs charities, observes austerities (vratas) and prays God to bless her with a son.

Such a deep-set belief occurs very often in ballads or epics in which the mother of the hero or heroine always bears her first child many years after marriage. During the interval, she imagines that she is a barren woman and curses herself. She believes that she will soon pass on her curse to everything that comes into contact with her.

Mother in dirge and other types of Folk-Songs :

The words signifying mother, "Thai, Amma, Thayi, Thalle" evoke an emotion of a gush of love and a profound sense of gratitute in the minds of daughters. These feelings are expressed in proverbs in Tamil and Malayalam.

> 'Thayil chiranthathu oru koilum Illai' (Tamil)
> (There is no shrine holier than the mother).

In Kannada, there is a folk-song about mother, the opening lines of which are the following :

> "*When the word 'Thayi' is uttered,* my heart opens out like the petals of a jasmine flower".
>
> "May your name be the seeds on my tongue producing a good harvest of good fortune for me".[39]

The mother is the embodiment of sublime love. She is the source of succour to the daughter at all times. She sends her daughter kind gifts on all occasions of festivities, such as the birth of a *baby, marriage of a sister-in-law, Pongal, (Sankaranthi* Sankaramangala) Onam or other local festivals. A mother's love never changes its steady flow whatever be the ups and downs of the course of the daughter's life. When the mother dies, the daughter is thrown into in consolable grief. The loss is irreparable.

After her mother's death, her sisters-in-law become the mistresses of the home in which she was born. Her claims as the daughter of the family will not be recognised by them. She will

have no right to the property of her father, which will pass on to her brothers. Only the sons of her sisters-in-law will be heirs to the property of her father.

Such thoughts are expressed in dirges (oppari, Tamil) sung on the occasion of the death of the mother. An oppari sung on the mother's death is quoted below :

> It rains in the East, Vannaru swells with flood. In the stream of Vannaru fish splash in the water, I lost the fish I lost my mother.
>
> It rains in the South, Chinnaru swells with flood. In the stream of Chinnaru little fish splash in the water. No one will call me child now, I lost the fish, I lost my mother. (Vannaru and Chinnaru are rivulets. As they had dried up she will not get fish).[31]

After the death of the mother, the daughter forfeits all rights she used to enjoy as the daughter of the family. The sister-in-law assume powers of management of the household and deny any right, the daughter may claim. A daughter expresses this feeling in a folk-song.

> "When I travel by a golden car and arrive at my mother's house, I find I cannot stay there under the shade of my parental roof, I have no right in my mother's house. When I travel in a golden car and arrive at my husband's house, I am looked upon as a stranger belonging to the Pariah caste".[32]

We find here the feelings of desolation and alienation of a daughter after she had lost her mother. After the death of her mother, the home of her birth and the home of her husband that is supposed to be her own, have become alienated to her. She has become a stranger to both.

WIDOW

The condition of widows of all castes in India is miserable. Her presence at a wedding or a happy occasion is considered inauspicious. She cannot be present when a child is born to her

son or when ceremonies are performed for naming the child. She feels herself neglected during a wedding or any other happy occasion in her own family. She is forbidden to attend domestic religious ceremonies. She can participate only in the worship fo the village Goddess as an observer. A widow describes her feelings of desolation and alienation in a folk-song (Tamil).

> If I carry a plantain leaf and go to my son's house, they refuse to feed me, because it is a happy occasion. If I take a measure of rice and go to the Palani mountain to worship, the priest tells me that prayers will do me no good. If I take two measures of rice to Churili mountain to worship God, the priest tells me that prayer will do me no good.[33]

Worship and prayer will bring her no reward. She should remain a miserable lonely creature so long as she lived. Folk-songs speak of boys and girls of having been brought up by widows.

'He is the son of a widow' is an insulting abuse. To abuse a servant or an erring boy, the word widow 'Kamminatti' (Tamil) Vidhawa (Tamil) is freely used.

The widow in Kerala enjoyed a better status, because of the prevalence of polyandry there. Moreover the widow can remarry. Because of her value as owner of some property, she is sought for as a bride even after she is past youth. In a few South Indian tribal societies, there are no widows since remarriage is compulsory after the husband's death. Where fraternal polyandry prevails among a tribe, even if one of the husbands die, she will still remain the wife of the brothers. Lingayata women are permitted to remarry. But the elite drawn upon this custom.

Agriculture Transplantntion and weeding Plantation workers

Women of lower jatis are engaged mainly as agricultural labourers. Poor rural women-folk migrated during the course of the century to plantations and took up employment as workers in tea, coffee and cardamom plantations. They are at present employed

in a variety of jobs beedi workers, rice or corn grinders, scavengers, road and rail road workers etc. Still they are mainly employed as agricultural workers. They are paid less wages than what are paid to men for the same quality and quantity of work. Their work is wearisome and back-breaking.

Due to pressure on land, and crisis in agriculture, men and women had to migrate to Ceylon and to tea and coffee plantations in India. just then opened on the Western Ghats.

The life on the plantations is very hard. The scourge of malaria took a heavy toll. They toil and moil among wild animals, snakes and unsympathetic employers. When the cup of their bitterness begin to overflow, they return to their native villages. Worker-population in plantations become depleted. The owners send their labour contractors to recruit workers. There are many songs describing the conversation between the contractors and woman whom they try to persuade to enlist as plantation workers. A folk-song indicates how the agent tries to persuade a young woman to get recruited as a coolie; exaggerating the advantages she would enjoy, if she goes to work there, and how she replies to him. She has already had a taste of plantation work and is not drawn in by the sweet deceptive words of the labour-contractors (Kankani) Tamil.

Their conversation is narrated in a folk-song.

Agent: I shall pay five-rupees per head as advance. Shall we board the train leaving at five this evening ? Listen to me girl; don't refuse. If you work for the whole year you will earn a lot of money. If you hand in five pounds of tea, at the drying yard (every day) you will be paid five annas per day. You will be given six measures of rice for five days. You will get an allowance of one rupee every week. You will get a present of a sari every six months; when they settle accounts every year, you will get a woolen blanket free. You will get a maternity allowance of five rupees, when you deliver a child; when you are in your monthly periods, you will get leave with pay.

The young woman : If you work in my field uncle, I shall pay you wages. Don't yearn for the fruit, that you cannot pluck. I don't want to work for a whole year; I don't want to work even for a week; I don't want to fall down and cry in the drying yard. Only when conjee is not available I must think of five pounds of tea. I am not in want of rice or dhal. Don't talk to me as if I were a beggar. I have a plot of land to work on. Why should I go to a far off forest ? If you ascend the mountain top, anyhow you have again to descend to the fields. Take those with you who would work there. Go and talk about wages and saris to your sisters. I want to marry, I can choose a handsome youth in my own village.[29]

Only those, who were stricken with extreme poverty, want to work in the plantations. The work is back-breaking and the treatment cruel. Many songs describe the sorrowful thoughts of women-workers languishing in the cold mountain slopes, shedding their sweat to no other purpose than to enrich the whiteand black planters.

Here is another song of a woman-worker in plantation describing the lot of a woman-worker.

1. With flowers on my hair the agent brought me here. He kills me, putting me to back-breaking labour.

2. I went to the cardamom plantation; I worked there seven or eight days. Then I left for my home, drawn to the green fields of my village. Tears flowed down my cheeks and breasts. I have seen cardamom plantations. I have seen coffee plantations. Cruel famine drove me from my village to the plantations of Kombai and Pannaipuram,

Women as Agricultural and Plantation workers :

The two most important types of agricultural labour are transplanting and weeding in the paddy strain. These are both highly skilled tiresome work. These two types of operations

are the exclusive monopoly of women in Tamil Nadu. For transplanting paddy seedlings, women have to stand in miry fields, with their bodies bent double, planting the seedlings one by one without damaging the roots. They have to work without changings their posture for hours on end. Till very recent times, these two types of labour were the monopoly of the women of the lowest castes, especially those belonging to the Palla and Pariah castes.

Transplantation songs called Natukai Pattukal were sung by women of the Palla and Pariah castes, to while away weariness, while they transplanted paddy seedlings. There used to be singing and dancing before the transplanting operation began. The 'Koilolugu', a Tamil chronicle of the Srirangam Temple in Thanjavur temple, mentions that there existed Natukai songs and a Natukai attam which a Brahmin arayar (a learned dance teacher) learned from the Pallans. The God himself was charmed by the song and dance of the Pallas, that the arayar of the temple decided to learn it from the Palla women. He is said to have gone to the Palla cheri and taken up his residence there to learn these songs and dance. Such was the power of the folk-song and dance, that it captivated even the learned araya.

This legend is symbolic of the vigour and charm of folk-music and dance. An excellant literary work in Tamil, Mukkudal Pallu, contains a few literary versions of 'Natukaipattu'. Sri Lanka also can boast of a few pallus of excellent literary merit, which contain Natukai Pattukkal.

The miserable existence of the agricultural labouring class has made labour a heavy burden and necessary druggery. The labouring sections have become alienated more and more from the fruits of labour. This is the reason why song and dance are vanishing rapidly from the labour life of the agricultural labourers and poor peasants. Songs of this type still prevalent in Thanjavur District are fast dying out. No time should be lost in collecting them.

These songs have for their themes, courting between the boys and girls of the labouring class, appeal of the land-owners to transplant closely praise to the generous land-owner, abuse to the

miserly landlord. The theme of love is most common. While the women are engaged in transplanting seedling, men stand on the raised bunds of the field and throw bundles of seedling for the women to catch when they have exhaused their stock. As a lad throws the bundle he sings.

> Those villagers plough yonder, the sparrow chatters, the leveller is drawn over the field. You short lass, planting seedlings in the square field, won't you plant the seedlings I throw ? You, short lass, come to the temple common after finishing your work. I shall be sitting on the stone half buried in the earth, Call me, I shall come.

Here we find the healthy longing which a working man extends to a working woman in the background of labour. Sexual desire is set against the background of the field, labour and rest There is no exaggerated panegyrics, or romantic flamboyance in mutual love-talk between working boys and girls.

Here follow two more songs of the same type :

> You, short lass, planting in the four cornered field, won't you plant me too as you plant the seedlings ?

Hearing the song, the girl raises her eyes from the soil and looks at him to see if the song was meant for her. He continues the song.

> You, who plant seedlings,
>
> You, who unbend your body,
>
> My life, my eye,
>
> It was I who sang,
>
> It is for you to listen, my girl.[30]

A song is concerned with an appeal of a poor farmer who requests the women-transplanters to plant the seedlings close to each other, so that there will be a greater number of seedlings in the same area of the field than if they plant them sparsely as they did. If they did not plant them closely, their working time will be

short. If they plant them closely, then there will be more yield for the farmer. The farmer being poor, must obtain as much yield as possible from the small area of his field. The planting work being the monopoly of the women of the Palla and Pariah castes, the former, who usually belongs to a higher caste, has to implore them to head his request. The possession of a particular skill, adds value to their labour. The farmer of the high caste who usually passes on commands to the workers of a lower caste, has now to bow before them in supplication. A song describes the situation thus :

> Oh, woman, planting (seedlings) in the four cornered field, I am also poor (like you); please plant closely. Woman who is returning to the field after preparing crab soup, your ankle adorned with an anklet evokes admiration from lads. They court you with longing for six months I am poor (like you); plant closely, Women, Oh, you women, lads admire your pretty bun (of hair). They court you for six months, I am poor, plant closely.

This farmer appears to be kind-hearted. He tries to humour the girls, praising their legs and knot of hair, which he thinks have attracted the attention of working-lads. He whispers that they should take these references as compliments to their charm. He is trying to appeal to the weakness of young women who feel proud, if they are courted by young men. The farmer makes use of this womanly weakness to achive his-purpose.

The women-planters who work on the farm of a generous landlord sing in praise of the farm and the owner of the farm. A song purporting to be sung in praise of a farm and the farmer is quoted below :

> 'How many workers ? Hundered workers, Sixty two workers, work on Avudai Thangam's farm. The crowd of workers is a feast to the eyes. Avudai Thangam enlists fifty workers, calls each one by name and pays them generously.

Weeding songs are also on the wane.

The themes are the same as we find in planting songs. Most of the songs recorded have love as their themes. Only one type of song labour-formula-nonce song intends to wear away weariness : (Enam pattukal)[39]

PULAYAR SONGS

No community in India has suffered such indiquities in their history as the Pulayars, the untouchable landless agricultural labourers of Kerala. They were not only untouchable to the people of higher caste Hindus, but unapproachable too. The Brahmins of Kerala (Namboodhiris) imposed upon them rules of segregation and rules of a distance of 64 feet for Namboodhiris and 32 feet for Nairs. If a Pulaya transgressed this rule, he caused pollution, which had to pe ritually cleansed by a ritual of expiation, that would cost much money. The Pulaya had to pay the expenses of expiation. At nights, the distance cannot be easily guessed. The Pulaya was required to shout 'Nayen' 'Nayan' (the dog, the dog) to warn persons of higher castes of his approach. He was to degrade himself by calling himself a dog. He had to address his master 'Thampuran' (God) and his master's wife as Thampuratti (Goddess) All Pulayas were agricultural labourers working on the lands of land-owners belonging to the higher castes. They also till small plots of land allotted to them by their masters to build a hut for their residence and to appropriate the produce from them as 'jeevitham' (annual remuneration for his work). Swami Vivekananda was so much shocked at these practices of untouchability, that he called the society of Kerala Lunatic Asylum of India'. Abolition of landlordism in Kerala and untouchability have relieved the miserable slavish conditions of the Pulayas a little. Still they are segregated to rural slums and untouchability is practised, though not so rigorously as it was half a century ago.

The practice of such in human customs on the Pulayas was intended to maintain the superiority of the Namboodhiri and the Nair, the land-owning castes, over the main labouring caste. It was to keep down his legitimate desire for fair wages and a clean life. He should not know how the land-owners lived lives of luxury, without having to work and why he had to lead a dog's life, even though he worked all day.

The Namboodhiri land-owners of Kerala followed the rule of primogeniture and the Nairs, matrilinear succession. The property of the Namboodhiri was inherited by the eldest son, the younger sons could claim only an allowance for their maintenance. To prevent fragnentation of land holdings, they adopted a marriage system whereby the eldest son alone married a Namboodhiri bride, The property passed on to the eldest son of the Namboodhiri by his Namboodhiri wife. All younger sons had 'sambandham' a type a contract marriage with Nair women. As a by-product of this system, many Namboodhiri girls could not marry. In every Namboodhiri household there lived a few spinsters, who remained unmarried all their lives. They lived as 'ghosha' women who were not allowed to be present before men, the exception being her father and brothers. Pulayas were permitted to enter the precints of the garden around the house. Since Pulayas were only dogs to Namboodhiris, the women could be present before them when they work. Then the 'dogs' who were really men, though degraded by the living conditions imposed on them and the Goddesses who were only women destined to live as maids all their lives, used to develop intimacy. Thus the rules of unapproachability were demolished by the all-powerful shafts of Kama, the God of love. Though such intimacies were suppressed by the visitation of the most cruel punishment of death for the erring man, expulsion from the Namboodhiri community, for the woman, no fear of punishment could completely crush human longing for a sex-partner. When the intimacy between a Pulaya man and a Namboodhiri maid was discovered, the woman was expelled from the community. Considering that the funeral rites were performed for her by her family, she left the Namboodhiri 'Matha' (the mansion of the Namboodhuri) and went to live with her paramour in Pulai cheri. Such incidents were frequent in the first half of the twentieth century. The Namboodhiri woman's expulsion and the Pulaya's acceptance of her in his hut in days past is known to the people of Kerala as 'Pulaippiti' (seizure by a Pulaya). Many oral stories were current among the lower castes on the subject of 'Pulaippiti'. This fact of life became a theme in folk-songs of the Pulayas. Kumaran Asan the great poet of Malayalam renaissance and the foremost social reformer has chosen this theme and set it in the background of the Moplah revolt in his literary ballad

'Duravastha Savithri. The heroine of the ballad goes to live with a Pulaya, who was a slave of her father, when all the members of her family lost their lives, and her house burned down in the violence during riots of the Moplah revolt in her village. She marries him and devotes herself to the uplift of the Pulaya community.

The rich folklore of the Pulayas has almost vanished due to wilful neglect. A few attempts by courageous collectors have brought out a few songs of the Pulayas to light. The songs of the Pulaya 'dogs' reveal their joys and sorrows, their determination to struggle for a better life and their attachment to the soil. The songs are largely women's creations. They are therefore included here.

Three songs are quoted below to illustrate the types of songs they sing, which show close associations with land and labour.

PULAYAR SONG 1

(A song sung while paddy seedlings are transplanted)

Seasonal rains fell and drenched our small fields,
Bind the seedlings into bunches with naru,
and throw them into the fields.
Omele, Senthile, Mala,
Little Kannamma. Kali, Kurumbi,
Satha, Sadaiya, Mara - - little girls all come to the field.

They came, entered the field,
shared the seedlings, began
planting the seedlings, doubling their
bodies, tying their frocks above the knee.

Little Kannamma called Omele;
She cried out Omele, Omele,
Let us sing a song before we leave the field.
Let us sing a song before we leave the field.

Then she saw a girly perched upon a
mango tree, crying aloud in pain. Little
Omele looked up and cried.

'Thathamma', my friend, listen to
what I say, "when the seedlings
grow ripe, you will come with us.

You have hands to reap and a throat to
swallow, till we finish planting, you must
sit there and sing.'

Thathamma, perched on the tree said,
'Go ahead with planting, singing the burden,
'Thanatham, Thanatham', Thathayyam, Thathayyam
Tharomthimi'

Omela started to sing. Thathamma burst out
singing. All the girls joined Omela in chorus.
Thathayyam, Thathayyam, Tharom-thim, Thathayyam,
Thinnayi, Tharom.

(Thatthamma - literally. a parrot)[30]
(Padmanabhan Thampi and Kulathooran, March, 1976)
(Trivandrum)

Transplantation is an agricultural operation entirely reserved for women, mostly of the Pulaya caste. This particular song indicates that Pulaya girls are working on their father's fields, not their own land, but allotted to them as 'jeevitham'. All the produce of this small plot will be their own. In return for this kind of payment, they had to work on the landlord's without wages, because he had bought his labour-power in the market, just as one buys a machine or a tool.

The Pulaya was alienated from his own labour-power, which was his human essence. The song describes his thoughts, as he returns to his hut after a day's hard work in the fields of his master.

PULAYAR SONG 2

The day fades, the day fades, beyond the thalai fence, the little water-cocks toddle, attempting to fly.

When I arrived here first,
I fenced this plot of land,
When I arrived here first,
I dug this pond. When
I arrived here first, I built this hut.
He gave me half a peg of toddy. He
yoked me like a bullock to work.
He killed me with hard toil. He gave
me half the kernel of a cocoanut, to
prepare curry to go with rice. He
killed me with hard toil, The day
fodes; the little water-cocks learn to fly.[31]

Sorrow and tear-laden life of a Pulaya slave is autobiographically portrayed in the song. The thoughts reflected in the song, can be compared to Longfellow's dreams of the Negro slave in the poem, 'The Slave's Dream'.

The fallow land belonged to the master. The labour of the Pulaya turned it into fields, watered by a well that he dug. A fence was put up by him around the field. The water-cocks nested in the trees that had grown up from plants he had planted. His labour had increased the value of the fallow land. As he had sold himself to the land-owner, his labour that produced wealth, belonged not to him, but to his master. He is not happy and

contented for having changed the face of the earth from a barren stretch of land into a fertile field with a fence and a well. He began to reflect upon the social reality. Even little girls had to work, if they wanted to eat. The little girl Thathamma is very young for the work. Transplantation involves back-breaking toil which the girl, Thathamma could not cope up with. She climbs a tree and begins to cry in pain, as the older girl Omele asks her to sing staying on her perch, while the other girls work on the field. She is reminded that she has hands to work and a throat to eat. If she wanted to eat, she must use her hands for work. They sing to wipe off the tears of pain. These childran have to engage themselves in hard work, if the family had to subsist on at least a bowl of rice gruel and a piece of fried fish. *The economic life and status* of the family is artistically portrayed by the illiterate and anonymous folk-poets or poetesses in the lines.

> You have hands to reap and a throat to eat. You must sit there and sing till we finish work.

Thathamma is unable to work, because she soon becomes tired of the planting work which causes pain. But she has to work. The older girls exempt her from work, allowing her to sing, while they worked. The song puts up their spirit, when it sags down due to the monotony and heaviness of the work of planting. The song portrays the reality of the Pulaya's life of labour and misery. The song is not an expression of joy, but a palliative to suffering.

The other song, was sung by a middle-aged Pulaya labourer who came to a village and became a slave to a land-owner. he built himself a hut and reclaimed fallow land for his master. After three decades, he reflects the past and realises that he has merely sold his labour-power to the land owner in return for the food and drink and the use of the hut, in order to keep body and soul together. What his labour produced, did not belong to him. The shoots of social consciousness begin to sprout in him.

Other Pulaya songs express their joy, when they see the produce of the fields heaped into a 'poli' before sharing out begins. The joy ebbs away, when the thought flits across their minds, that

the harvested grain belongs to the Thampuram and Thampuratti (the lord and the lady) by virtue of their ownership of the land on which they expended their labour. They become conscious of social distinctions and their position in the society besed on the values of land-ownership.

CONCLUSION

I have endeavoured in this chapter to give a general conceptional image of the 'folk-women', in their manifold roles in family and society divided into caste and class. This is not an abstract, ghost like portrait of the folk-women, but is a picture of the woman in flesh and blood in their varying vicis situdes of life, acting in the historically conditioned social formations in Tamil Nadu (and in Kerala). I have in this study relied mainly on woman's autobiographic material, her own lullaby songs, love-songs, labour songs and dirges and on anthropological material collected by me and my pupils. I have also drawn upon the material laboriously collected by folklorists, of Kerala and Kannada regions.

The consciousness of freedom, education of women, mobility of women to different jobs, the women's social and political movements and the common mass-movements of the rural people, for their economic, social and political uplift are drawing into its vortex our women of the folks. The rising trend appears to be more and more participation of women in socio-cultural and political affairs of the country, in the programmes of its development, aspiring for equality with men in education, employment, status and marriage.

Women's organisations, Trade Unions and Agricultural labour unions and Mahila Sabha are uniting working women to transform women from their domestic slavery into liberated women, to take their place as the equals of men in family, social and national life. The new upsurge of women is being felt in all walks of life. Women are breaking the chains that bind them to theirhome, domestic drudgery, unskilled labour and double exploitation by the employer and the husband. They are emerging from their subordinate position in domestic, social and national life as a transforming and constructive force in Indian national life. This

became obviously evident from the activities of Indian women in the International Women in the International Women's year.

WOMAN IN FOLK-LORE

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21. Mandelbaum—Society in India—joint family.

22. Perialwar—A Vaishnavaite saint who lived in the 7th century and foster father of Andal, the Vaishnavaite poetess

23. 'Tamil Nattu Padalkal'—On barrenness

24. Kannada Folksong translated by Devendra Harkari (Karnataka University)

25. 'Tamilar Nattu Padalkal'—Oppari (dirge) on mother

26. do.

27. Labour Songs — Plantation

28. do.

29. do.

30 & 31. do.

32. Elrram : a bucket attached by a rope passing over a pulley drawn by bullocks. The man who drives these bullocks to draw water sings these songs.

Models of Heroes : Chapter Summary

Starting with the assumption that myths and legends are prior to epics, this chapter analyses both epic and folk-heroes as to individual characteristics and general types. Bowra's 28-point description or heroes is considered in relation to Indian heroes. It is found that Bowra's listing of heroic traits *is not comprehensive*

enough in the Indian situation. Besides, his conception of heroism is based on Western models. It is contended in these pages, that the hero types prevalent in a given social group reflect the nature of the various interaction between folk and elite within the group, and talking about universality might be insidious. A thematic structure of hero-types in a Russian heroic poem is given; from it, the evolution of heroes from supernatural to society-based is portrayed.

There are two types of Indian epic-heroes : miraculous birth and natural birth types. A detailed thematic comparison of these two types is attempted in this chapter.

Bhima and Hanuman, showing. as they do, characteristics of pre-iron age heroes, are compared as to their different evolutionary stages. Similarly, Rama, Krishna and Arjuna are also compared. It is shown how Rama emerges as the supreme hero of the warrior and elite classes, and how Krishna comes to be idealised not so much as a hero, but a mentor of heroes. Such a comparison of heroes also serves to point out the limitations of the Bowra-Raglan classification of heroes.

In the second part of the chapter, folk-heroes are considered. These folk-heroes are normally not known outside the region to which they belong. Seven folk-ballads, four from Tamil and three from Kannada, have been taken up for analysis. From an account of the biographies of the heroes, a scheme of values belonging to the folks and reflecting their view of valour (inter alia, other traits) has been drawn up. Through cross-references to the life history of Kattabomman and Jambulingam on whom ballads are not available, the concept of folk-heroes in the Tamil tradition is elaborated. The areas of agreement and the circumstances of such agreement between elite and folk concepts are also discussed towards the end. And interpretation of the mixing of non-folk elements in folk-ballads is also given in the chapter.

HEADINGS

1. Concepts of elite hero : Bowra Concept and Raglan Scale.

   a) Evolution of the elite concept of hero : Evolution of types - Folk-tale Preheroic and heroic types.

   b) Raglan : Concepts applied to classical heroes of the heroic age of any culture.

2. Folk-heroes

   Classification into types

   a) Local hero

   b) Notional hero I : Folk-hero accepted by the elite.

   c) National hero II : Elite hero adopted by the folks.

3. Conclusion

THE MODELS OF HERO

(The epic and folk-concepts)

EPIC HEROES

PART I

Considerable work has been done by scholars in literature, anthropology and mythology on the image of a hero from purely literary sources. These sources belong to the area of mythological and epic literature. In the level of origin, myths and legends originated earlier than epics all over the world. The types of the hero of epics of myth-legendary epoch and the classical epoch exhibit basic differences, though epic carries the birth-marks of the preheroic period.

The studies of classical and folk-heroic poetry by C. M. Bowra[1] and the Russian folk heroic poetry, Bylina by Western and Soviet scholars, especially V. Miller (1897)[2] and Propp and Puticov[2] and Yugoslav folk heroic poetry of Milmann Parry have brought to light the ideal and elements that go to make up the conceptual image of Hero.

Dealing with stages of primitive narrative poetry. Bowra observes (Heroic Poetry p.25), "We can trace a series of stages in the development of primitive narrative poetry. As the start is Shamanistic poetry, in which the chief character is the magician and magic is the

main means of success. This is touched by the new spirit of man entered universe, which appearing separately in panegyric and lament items, invades narrative and produces a heroic poetry, in which gods and men both take part. Then it bifurcates into the poetry of gods and the poetry of man. Heroic poetry proper, thus covers the whole of the second era and half of the next. It is composed in the conviction that its characters belong to a special superior class which it sets."

The following table indicates the stages of development of heroic poetry.

The ideal reflection of universe	Type of poetry	Hero
1. The supernatural is the driving force of the universe which can be directed by magic.	Shamanistic poetry	Shaman
2. Man-centred universe	Panegyric and lament classical heroic poetry	Gods and men
3. Bifurcation of the celestial and earthly spheres	Heroic poetry	Men of special superior class set in the past

The epic hero according to Bowra has certain special characteristics. These characteristics are drawn from human heroes of the third stage of the table. They are enumerated and explained with numerous instances from heroic poetry of many nations in chapter III of Heroic Poetry (Bowra: Page 91-131). He lists the following general characteristics of the epic hero.

1. In the poetry of heroic, action, leading parts are assigned to men of superior gifts, who are presented and accepted as being rather superior to other men.

2. A hero differs from other men in the degree of his powers. In most heroic poetry, these are specifically human, even though they are carried beyond the ordinary limitations of humanity.

3. Unlike in the preheroic epoch, in which the priest-magician is the hero, in the heroic epoch a notorious human being endowed with superior physical prowess and skilled in new weapons becomes the hero.

4. The hero of the epic age emancipates himself partially or entirely from the domination of the magical power opposing human power to the magical.

5. Whatever a hero's birth may be, of course it is natural enough he is recognised from the start as an extraordinary being, whose physical development and characteristics are not those of other men.

6. Soon the hero grows a pace in strength and stature heerb of ereaches adulthood.[5]

7. The hero possesses those gifts of body and character, which bring success in action and are admired for that reason.

8. A hero differs from other men by his peculiar force and energy.

9. This is commonly displayed in battle. The greatest heroes are men-of-war. [6]

10. They are compared to wild animals, lions, tigers, vultures, boars and the like (in Tamil heroic poetry, to fighting bulls, lions, tigers).

11. These qualities are seen in their keenest when a hero's temper is high and his thoughts turn to prowess.[3]

12. When a fight begins, heroes deliver blows with astounding and an almost delirious delight.[7]

13. The vitality of heroes sharpens their desire for battle and turns them into superhuman warriors.

14. Though physical strength is an essential part of a hero's endowment, he is no animal devoid of wits. On the contrary since wits are another sign in which he surpasses other man there is nothing discreditable in which their use to secure some glorious end.[8]

15. Though the hero's first and most natural need is his prowess and wit, the exercise of which he feels to be his right, he is ready to do so for some cause, which does not immediately concern his personal interest, but attracts him because it gives him a chance to show his worth.

16. The desire for prowess is an end in itself.[9]

17. Heroism for its own sake is exceptional. More commonly heroes devote their talents to some concrete cause, which provides scope for action and an end to which they can direct their efforts.[10]

18. Kings are admitted only when they become the champion of their peoples.

19. If kings do not often hold pride of place, their followers and ligemen do; and there are many notable examples of men, who perform heroic actions out of loyalty to the suzerain, which qualify them for heroism.[11]

20. A hero, as conceived by Hector, is the representative of the people, their spokesman and their exemplar. It is a rare thing to find a hero, not in a great prince nor leader, but in some less eminent person, who has his great hour in crisis; or in a group of persons who show their worth when their country is in peril.

21. When a country is under foreign domination, there is a tendency for every man to become a hero, who resists or fights the conquerors. Such mass-heroism is universal in all countries, which had in a period of history remained under foreign rule.[12]

22. The hero, who champions a people's rights, has taken a new form in modern times as a leader when the word "people" is used less of a race or nation than of the enseaved masses, who are helpless to assert their rights. Lenin is cited as such a hero in modern Russian folk-ballads.

23. The career of a hero needs, at least for artistic completeness, some kind of realisation. The efforts and the preparations must lead to an impressive event. Such an end is often a triumphant success which shows the hero's worth and wins him his due glory.

24. Not all heroes are concerned in this way. Often enough their careers seem to lead inevitably to disaster and find their culmination in it.[13]

25. Different from the disastrous choice is the disastrous mistake.[14]

26. The hero who finds troubles in himself, may find other troubles in his circumstances, and resist them with the same energy which he bestows or his adversaries. In his desire to be himself, he may seek to war against the whole condition of life.

27. The splendour, which irradiates a hero in the hour of death, is a special feature of heroic poetry.

28. In his consciousness, that life is short, the bero becomes more active and more heroic.

The characteristics of epic-heroes listed by Bowra is nearly identical with the criteria for the qualifications of the hero constructed by Rank, Raglan, Campbell and Hahn.

These character-traits found in epic-heroes appear to be universal to all of them transcending geographical barriers. This universality appears to transcend all limits of time and space. This epic-hero model looks apparently as a neat universal model. •

Why does this model include within it all particular models of national epic-heroes of most of the classical cultures of the world ?

The heroes of Mahabharat and Jeevakachintamanis[5] have verymuch in common with the epic- hero model of Bowra or Raglan.[16] Why is this so ? Can we accept Bowra concept and Raglan pattern as universal models of hero without concerning ourselves to examine the historical epoch and the social class from which these heroes were created and then modelled?

The similarity, nay, even identify of these models is due to the fact that they have been selected from culturally similar traditions, that flourished under similar socio-historic conditions in different nations. Different models emerging in different socio-historic epochs that changed and developed have all been fused into one historical model endowing it with a semblance of universality. Bowra concept is an abstract image of hero, arising from a similar class of heroes, reflecting the values of a particular segmant of society. The class-background of each of these values is the feudal-aristocratic milieu of the royal court. They are kings, princes, knights, religious leaders, generals of the army and persons in positions of power in the historic epochs of slave states or feudal states. Indeed the very biographical data of the hero pattern (Raglan) reveal the court bias clearly.

"The hero's mother is a royal lady" "His father is a king." "He marries a princess." He meets with "success in battle." "He builds a city." "He deposes a king, usually his father" "He becomes king."[7]

Though Bowra does emphasise the royal origin of the hero, his points 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10 are believed to be kingly traits by epic poets. Bowra simply adopts these kingly traits of a hero.

The lion and other wild animals mentioned in (10) are royal traits of lion or tiger believed to be elements of the 'character' of the kingly animal (Mrigendra). The fighting quality of certain animals is compared to the same qualities in a hero. Both action elements and quality elements of a hero, according to Bowra, endow the hero with 'special power' and differentitate him from other men', 'Single-minded pursuit of honour' and 'delight in battle' are usually associated with royal personages and believed to be noble qualities by the poets and bards, who created the charactres.

The hero of Bowra's conception represents the values of the ruling strata of ancient feudal and slave societies in many parts of the world. Whenever located, this social class in the slave and feudal social epoch, in Greece, Rome, Germany or Wales held similar values in high regard. These heroes embody the wishes of those associated with the court, to become king, to marry a prince, to win glory in battle and purse honour even to death, so that their future may be stable and secure. The court-poets and bards, who desired to please their royal patrons, accept the values of the court and project them in the make-up of the heroes of their songs. With courtly patronage, the songs and ballads are spread among the masses, who partially absorb the values and distort a few others; but in the main continue to cherish their own folk-values, which are opposed to the values of their masters.

For these reasons, the hero of Bowra and Raglan is an image of a vanished world of royalty, nobility, glory and chivalry, reflected in the heroic epic-literatures of the past. Their model is by no means universal " transcending all bounds of time and space."

The criterion for the image of the hero is a projection of the values of hero-worshiping social group or class. Social consciousness reflecting in values is largely dependent on the social being of the group in any particular society. Thus the image of a hero of a particular social epoch is a fantastic or realistic reflection of the social consciousness of the group or class. The concepts of a hero of different classes in a particular society will be different corresponding to the level of development of their social consciousness. Thus the myths and legends of tribal societies reveals the conceptual image of the tribal hero. Scholarly studies of tribal myths by American and European scholars bring to light their image of the hero. Strauss has constructed a few models of tribal hero, their archetype and variation. Both American and European scholars have attempted to universalise the model to all societies and all time levelling down the barriers of time and space. But their model of the tribal hero may be quite relevant to tribal societies that have simliar social basis, different from each other because of the various levels of development in the process of civilisation and enlightenment.

The tribal hero is different in nature from the civilised hero of any ancient or modern civilisation.

The tribal hero brings fire or a seed or a weapon that benefits the whole tribe. He is absent from home in fear of his father, who wants to kill him for having raped his mother, He hides himself on a rock or on top of trees, gains friendship with a wild animal and is taken by it to its home, where he is brought up by the wife of the wild animal. He finds fire there, which he steals and brings it to his[18] tribe, (Strauss:- Study of Mythology)

This tribal hero is of the culture hero type.

He invents a weapon or tool that will benefit the whole tribe. (A woman is believed to have invented the loom for weaving silk by the Tanghul tribe of North-east India. She is considered a heroine by them. She is an inventor-heroine of the tribe.[19] (Field-work : Arokianathan)

Those who kill wild boars in order to protect mountain crops, those who increase the guardian ghost army by killing men belonging to tribes other than one's own are considered tribal heroes both while they live and after they are dead (D. N. Majumdar).[20] The actions of the tribal peoples are dominated by beliefs in magic and supernatural powers of spirits, ghosts, gods and goddesses. He practises white magic for the benefit of his clan or tribe and black magic against his enemies. He engages in magical contests with his opponents and achieves success (Folk-tales). He goes out on head-hunting expeditions to avenge the death of his tribal kin or to augment the spiritual protective power of dead souls. He wins glory and fame in proportion to the number of kills he brings to wear as symbols of triumph and merit.

The tribal hero lives and moves in the world of tribal, social and cultural values, which in turn determine the selection of cultural values to be integrated into the hero image. "The preheroic peoples of ancient cultures values to be Integrated into the hero image. "The preheroic peoples of ancient cultures lived in social conditions very similar to the modern tribal folks".* Their myths and legends were a reflection of their social being.

Social anthropologists agree upon the concept of *gradual* evolution and sudden leaps in the process of development in social formations, beginning with savage society. Gordon Child accepts the stages of evolution of society as *brilliantly* propounded by Engels.[23] It was not always a peaceful and gradual evolution through which society underwent changes. At model points of change, violence played the role of nurse to deliver the new society growing in the womb of the old. Gradual changes in social consciousness reached a point of curation at which it was transformed into a new consciousness with its new values, which were dominant under the domination of the old values in the previous *social formation.* Thus the physical strength and magical power of Ea, the great mother, yielded place to Mendock with his spear, net and chariot, a god-king of a more developed social being. Samson and Hercules *the prodigies of strength,* who could lift the world and uproot trees receded in estimation of the people of the new epoch with new values projected in every ideal image including the image of the hero. This perhaps corresponded to the emergence of the iron age and the production of the ploughshare and iron weapons. This epoch produced new concepts of might based on skills in using weapons. Samson, Hercules, Bhima and Hanuman gave place to heroes wielding iron weapons like sword, bow and arrow, spear, trisula, discus etc. Achilles and Hector and Murugan Rama, Arjun, and Indrajit, Krishna and Balaram etc.[23] But they bore the birth marks of their ancestors, who were embodiment of physical strength. Their enemies, who were vanquished by them, were modelled after the heroes of the previovs epoch. During the transitional period, both the types of images of heroes coexisted in *epic-poetry,* the first losing importance gradually and the second gaining prominence more and more. The types of heroes of the previous epoch took subordinate position under the new epoch as servants, *slaves and vassals (Guha and Hanuman in Ramayana,* Bhima in Mahabharat).

The study of Skazka (fairy tale) and Bliny (heroic epic-ballad) beginning with Muller (1897) to Propp and Putilov (1964) by *Russian scholars has revealed their similarities and* differences, The differences are due to the **transformation** of the fairy-tale type of magical hero into the human epic-hero.

The fairy-tale hero model has three structural components (Propp).[24]

1. Miraculous birth
2. The journey from home to the donor
3. The helper (donor and magical agent)

"The fairy-tale heroes fall into two categories. Heroes born naturally belonged to one and heroes born miraculously, to the other". (Alexe Alexander).[25] Miraculous birth may be due to the swallowing of a pea or a nut or the union with a snake or the progeny of an animal.

In the fairy-tale the miraculous birth endows heroes with supernatural power. He is not dependent on the donor or the magical agent.

But the hero, who was born naturally, requires a donor and a magical agent and is dependent on the latter for his powers. If the magical agent is withdrawn, he loses his supernatural abilities.

Comparison of the two categories of fairy-tale heroes those born miraculously and those born naturally, shows that the former are brave, invincible heroes who need no donors, the latter must rely on donors and are helpless when deprived of magical agents.

The structural pattern is identical in the two types of tales, though the essential function of the donor is eliminiated in the tales with miraculous birth. The folk-tale bias is towards miraculously born heroes, the naturally born being rated inferior to the former.

Alex Alexander arrives at the conclusion, from the above premises, that "the miraculously born hero rather than the naturally born one indeed exhibits a close kinship with the hero of the epic.

Structural and formal consideration alone could lead to such a conclusion. Contextual and thematic considerations of the image of epic-hero have been neglected in arriving at the conclusion by the analogical method. Let us consider the thematic elements of the epic hero in Bliny.

With the single exception of one hero, who had a miraculous birth and metamorphic ability, all the other heroes of Byliny had natural births. The hero has an extrinsic source of power, namely crafty lore. He acquires the metamorphic skill on his own. He maintains a degree of self-sufficiency.

Thematic structure of hero-type in Russian heroic poems

Type 1 Folk-tale hero-Miraculous birth	Type II Folk-tale hero Natural birth	Type III Epic birth (BLINY)
1. Miraculous birth from snake, seed, animal, fish.	Natural birth from human parents	Natural birth with only a few exceptions
2. Self-sufficiency because of miraculous birth	Not self-sufficient because of fraternal birth	Epic self-sufficiency obtained by learning 'wisdom crafty core'
3. No donor of magical objects necessary	Needs a donor or a substitute for it	
4. Magical objects arrive in moments of crisis	Donor supplies magical objects to be kept for a limited space or time	Not indispensable; hero makes donor surrender to the magic object.
5. He knows what he needs and how to obtain it	Lucky accidents bring him magical objects.	Not indispensable; agent is not magical in nature; acquires an agent on his own.
6. Fights a monster or supernatural enemy	Fights a monster dragon or giant; but once he loses, the magical object loses strength and power before his adversary	His strength leads occasionally to a subsequent addition of a supernatural justification strength,
7. Possesses metamorphic ability	Obtains the power from donor	
8. He himself is endowed with magical power	Obtains magical power from magical objects	The pattern loses its magical and supernatural aspects and is transformed into epic selfsufficiency.

The structural pattern of all the three types of heroes is identical-donor, magical agent. Formal similarity is not the same as similarity in thought content. Noting that epic heroes of Byliny are structurally similar to type I heroes, Alexe Alexander concludes "The epic hero usually follows the pattern more closely than the miraculously born hero"[26] According to him type III heroes have more pattern similarity to type I heroes than heroes of type II.

The conclusion is based on formal pattern similarity, without taking into account the concrete socio-historical conditions and the cultural and aesthetics values that prevailed during the epochs, when each of the different types of heroes were held in high admiration, Heroes social and cultural values of the groups that create in different epochs are entirely left out of account, while considering similarities and differences in the concepts of the hero.

The author is conscious of this omission, when he admits :

"Turning to other Byliny heroes, we find them neither miraculous nor dependent on their donors".

"The epic hero can succeed without a miraculous birth, donor or agent."

"Yet this pattern (donor-magical agent) undergoes a transformation. Alesa disguises himself as a pilgrim, pretends not to hear Tugarin in order to get him into the right position and then delivers the blow. The hero directs the event as he sees it."

"The pattern loses its supernatural aspect and is transformed in order to show epic self-sufficiency.

"In his study of heroic poetry, Bowra points to the anthropocentric quality of the epic narrative; a concern with man and his world and the depiction of his great deeds of war,

"Aksakov argues that the folk-proverb, the tale is fiction, the song is a fact", states the essential aesthetic difference between the 'bylina' and the folk-tale. Anthropocentricity of the epic narrative, the use of the modified hyperbole, and the depiction of the epic-hero and the decrease in the supernatural in the portrayal of the

epic adversary are all expressions of the movements toward the suspension of disbelief. Perhaps it should be noted that if the modern reader finds little believable in 'bylina' he should remember that the Russian folk epic was not composed for him. The genre must be appreciated on its own terms."[27]

I have quoted Alexe Alexander extensively to show that he realises that the action of the Biliny as well as classical epic heroes, sets him in the sociohistorical epoch of the dawn of the iron age. The miracles of the magic world was losing its attraction for the man who with their on plough, iron tools especially the axe, and the sword and spear and arrow acquired tremendous power over forces of nature and also his enemies. The plough necessitates securing vast areas of land for its use. He had to protect himself from depredations from neighbouring tribes and the aggressive invasions of kings of other countries. The conqueror-hero with prowess, skill in arms and qualities of leadership had to emerge as the hero of epics to project the values of the new age. But, this was the age of class stratification (as slave owners and slaves, feudal lords and serfs) in many ancient civilisations (in North India, the wija, the wice born and Sudhra). Private property in slaves and land originated and developed. Manual labour was reserved for the masses of people, who by their labour had to sustain the material life of society. Tribal collective life was destroyed and the society split into the labouring majority and the intellectual miniority. The miniority owned land and slaves and directed all their efforts to extend their lands and increase their power to keep the labouring masses chained to their labour. The values of tribal collective life, their world of myth and magic, the spiritual reflection of their material life was partially destroyed. When the tribes emerged out of their isolation and ignorance and combined themselves into the class society with its division of intellectual and manual labour, the collective tribal values were destroyed by new values of the new world. Folk-tale spiritual world was replaced by the heroic spiritual world of the elite group of the new world. Values changed, old and the new were in mortal conflict, the new finally triumphed.

But the new world, both its material base and its spiritual superstructure, was born in conflict within itself. The social being

of the elite and that of the labouring masses were quite different, and opposed to each other. Their social and cultural values were opposed to each other depending upon their social being in the social formation as it had developed in the heroic epoch. But the ideology of the ruling class was bound to the dominant ideology of the epoch. The men of action, heroes, were all drawn from the ruling class of the new society in this epoch. The concept of the hero of the old society was tranformed into the hero of the new society. Man was transformative, acquiring more mastery over the forces of nature, and in the process, gaining more confidence and self-assertion. The rationalisation of the situation having been the prerogative of the elite of the epoch, it was biased in favour of their own social consciousness and group interests.

Now the evolution of the epic hero from type I through type II will become clear. Type I hero is the ideal image of the tribal hero projecting his values and aspirations. This image reflects a sense of wonder of the tribal folks who lived collectively, each individual enjoying equality with the other members of the tribe. Any individual who rose head and shoulder above his kins-men was fancied to have been born miraculously. But his birth is associated with totemic belief. He is born by the union of a snake or lion with a woman, a woman swallowing a pea, or nut or holy meat, flour, water, from a fish or bull. Indian counterparts of the folk-tales and puranic legends are born of animals, pots of liquor or water, out of the sweat of a goddess (Ganesh)[28] out of the sparks of fire emitted from the third eye of Siva (Veerabadhra and Subrahmanya) out of the union of Siva with Vishnu in the form of Goddess (Hariharaputra or Sastha). In such miraculous births, he has no human father or mother. Thus he is elevated above the humans of the tribe and differentiated from them. He needs no helper, no donor of magical objects, for he is endowed with supernatural magical powers even at birth. Krishna of Bagavatha (epic), while still a child, killed two Asuras, who turned themselves into the wheels of a cart and attempted to kill him. Another infantile heroic episode narrated in the same epic is the killing of Bhutana, a demoness, who planned to kill the infant Krishna by feeding him from her breast with poisonous milk. The baby sucked not only milk but also all the blood out of her. Instances can be multiplied

from all ancient cultures and tribal legends to illustrate this tale. No. 2 of the folk-tale hero. Karthikeya (Subrahmanya, Muruga. Vela) Vide "self-sufficiency because of miraculous birth".[29] . His cry sounded like thunder, striking terror in the minds of the empire of gods. His miraculous birth ensures his superiority and self-sufficiency. Type I hero does not depend upon superior donors who bestow magical objects on the heroes. Magical objects are not indispensable for them to augment their power and energy. Energy, power, success and glory are inherent in them from birth. They need no extrinsic source of aid for their destined success and glory. All abilities, magical and otherwise are inherited by them by virtue of their birth.

The type I image is clearly the fantastic reflection of all the collective tribal life in the individual and collective tribal in the individual and collective consciousness of the tribe. Their warrior heroes and culture heroes are moulded in the type I image. But the heroes of highly insulated types, dying out (Australian aborigines and few South American tribes) are not of this mould. The difference is due to a consciousness and premonition of power. All developing tribal societies on the road to civilisation and the epic age produced a heroic image of Type I.

Type II image indicates a break with the values that are reflected in type I. The point of departure is the natural birth of the hero of human parents. The burden of the vanishing epoch weighs heavily upon him. The value of that epoch as reflected in type I hero is the cultural atmosphere in which he has to struggle. His natural birth denudes him of the attribute of self-sufficiency. The image contradicts the magical and supernatural spiritual environment. Having made the departure in their natural birth, they have to dispence with the endowed self-sufficiency rejecting the donor and magical objects. Still the formal structural pattern persists. The new foetus grows in the old womb. Being a human offspring, it requires helpers and donors to supply him with power to match their ancestors (type I heroes), to achieve the same degree of success in trials of strength and battles with enemies endowed with supernatural and magical power. The earthly human power has to be augmented by the accredition of magical power of the heroes of the declining epoch. Donor-magical object serves this

purpose. The type II hero acquires power and strength from extrinsic sources-Donor-magical object combiniation. He is still in his infancy and requires crutches to steady himself before he could take a plunge into the future. Yet he is qualitatively different from type I hero of miraculous birth and supernatural and magical endowments. His destiny is not pre-ordained by virtue of his birth. He has to struggle against odds to achieve heroism. He has to acquire the virtues of type I hero by his own human efforts. The struggle of the epoch of savagery is reflected in the ideal consciousness of the people *living in the age of transition. Man in a transitional epoch realises his human essence, and struggles against the supernatural and magical* and cultural environment that oppresses his human nature. He struggles for fulfilment of his human nature. He carries on this struggle in a transformed society. The transformation is itself a result of man's struggle against the social and cultural oppression of man by his own creation of the Frankenstein of the magical and mythological beliefs.

The shell of the old social formation breaks and *the new chick of class society sees light.* With it the dominating class of the elite, the owner of slaves and land, the ruler and priest, inheriting all the cultural products of the old epoch and selecting those that would further the interests of his social class, creates new cultural values. These new values of the elite group find reflection in the epic and its heroes. The epic hero is an evolutionary development from type II human hero in an elite cultural milier of the transformed epic world. *He is born of human parents but of royal or elite background.* His *self-sufficiency* is *not attained* by birth, but achieved by obtaining wisdom through his own efforts. Because of his membership of the elite ruling group, he needs no donor or magical objects to lift him to heroism. The pattern requirements are fulfilled by substituting his mother, who gives him a whip or his father, who presents him with a sword or armour. The donors are not superior to him nor the objects possess magical power. Mysterious donors and magical objects are not indispensable for his *cheerful triumph. He acquires all the aids to success on his own. As soon as Karthikeya is born, several gods,* who possess powerful weapons, visit him and deliver them to him. Rama is presented with arrows by Agastya and Baradwaja. His own strength leads occasionally to a subsequent addition of a

supernatural justification of strength. An instance of this is Indra's gift of his chariot to Rama after his preliminary successes in battles in Lanka.

The foregoing makes it evident that the epic-hero image loses its magical and supernatural aspects and is transformed into epic self-sufficiency. Though the epic-hero image may preserve the formal structural pattern of II and the trait pattern of I, it is qualitatively different from I in being human, and a quantitative development from the seedling of type II. The trait pattern appears to be the same between I and III. But individual traits which constitute the pattern in III are contradictory to traits in I and an evolutionary quantitative development of II, leading to a qualitative leap in the heyday of the heroic age.

The values in I and II are contradictory. The contradictory values that emerge as a seedling in II develops in a favourable social and cultural environment of the epic age into the fully grown fruit-bearing tree. In literary form and pattern, III approaches I and in value content it is twice removed from the point of departure from I to II. Thus a comparison of the stages of development can be formulated thus.

Type I

Hero Image	Reflection of Values	Social Pattern
Miraculous birth, Non human-Superior to man-Supernatural powers-Predestined to success-No help from any one-Himself a source of magical power-Opponents are destined to failure-All powers and abilities are manifestations of inherent magical power.	Shamanistic image Reflection of tribal values, and aspirations-Men ideally equal in tribal collective-Peerless ability and strength ascribed to miraculous birth by tribal mind-so hero is conceived of as a peerless supernatural paragon whom no human can equal.	A tribal collective flourishing and developing private property-Individualism, the result of acquisition of private property level of control over natural forces by man is low. Myth and legend the method of rationalisation of natural and social phenomena.

Type II
Point of Departure and its First Stage of Evolution

Folk-tale-Hero Image	Reflection of Values	Social Pattern
Point of departure-Natural birth from human parents	Humanisation of the hero image-Parentage -Human	Iron age ushering in a revolution in the social base of the tribes-Man becomes conscious of his strength. The iron plough revolutions food production and iron weapons lend new might to its possessors. Large areas of land brought under the plough and large territories conquered by use of new iron weapons in battle. These changes in social being produce changes in social and cultural values. The tribal formation is ripe for dissolution and a new formation is on the anvil.
Human imperfections require donors and aids (magical objects)	Human potentialties imperfectly grasped So temporary acquisition of magical power through magical objects	
The magical power is transcient. His permanent nature is human.	Loss of magical objects and reversion to human nature of heroes emphasised	
Magical power and other supernatural abilities are temporary acquirements superimposed upon his human essence. Loses supernatural powers, when he is separated from magical objects. Supernatural enemies are defeated by temporary acquisition of magical powers.	Struggle of human heroes against their tribal social cultural values reflected in the image of the hero. The thoughts of a people who have lost their old world but have not found their new world.	
Tragedy due to loss of temporary magical power and reversion to human nature		

TYPE III

Further most Development from the Point of Departure.

Epic Hero Type	Reflection of Values	Social Pattern
Natural birth, but in elite group-king's son of a princess/ son of high dignitary in the court — Son of high priest, minister, general not self - sufficient at birth —Learns 'wisdom', craftylore, acquires skills and knowledge -especially metamorphosis, magic power. 'Donor -Agent combination not indispensable for him. Agent is not magical, His own strength leads occasionally to a subsequent addition of a supernatural justification of strength. The type loses its magical and supernatural aspects and transforms itself into epic-self,	Complete break from tribal Shamanism — Belongs to the topmost strata of the elite group of the ruling class. In the class, society, the elite has to learn wisdom, which was endowed to type I hero at birth, Wisdom and craftylore have to be learned by his own efforts. 'Donor-Agent' combination is dispensed with, because he has no use for magical obiects. He may have helpers but not donors superiors to him. Complete emancipation from the magical and supernatural outlook and realisation or human essence.	Society divided into the labouring masses, mercenary soldiers, who are professional warriors and the elite ruling class, consisting of property owners, Their ideas have a class and group bias. The eplic heroes belong to this elite group of the ruling class of the epoch. Their aspirations are royal, attaining glory in battle by conquering territories and vanquishing powerful enemies. Heroic action means activity in war and following code of coduct considered noble by the group.

The epic-hero of the Western cultures and Russian Byliny are human heroes who achieve success by their own efforts, dispensing with magical formula and become self-sufficient by their social status and by seizing the opportunities available for the elite in the heroic age. They are completely emancipated from the magical and supernatural ideas of the previous epoch. Still magic and the supernatural play a role in the epic, but they do not direct the actions of the hero. The hero directs his own activities.

There are two types of Indian epic-heroes, those who have miraculous birth and those who are born naturally. Birth does not confer on the hero any special power. A few heroes, those who are born miraculously, partake of the traits of hero III. In birth alone he resembles type I. Those with human births are deified in a later age. The type of heroes of the preheroic age, which occupy a subordinate state in the heroic epics are heroes exhibiting physical powers and magical power. They can be compared to type I heroes in birth, donor-object and success. Still they are not completely dominated by the idea of the magical and supernatural. The epic-heroes may have natural birth or miraculous birth; but their heroic career is similar. I shall attempt a study of the hero pattern from a study of heroes, preheroic age and the age of Mahabharat, Ramayana, Bhagavata and also from Jain heroic epics. Let us compare the hero pattern of Bhima and Hanuman of the preheroic age appearing as subordinate heroes in Bharata and Ramayana. These two heroes are instances of the type of heroes of physical powers and supernatural powers. The magical element in Hanuman is evident from folklore and folk-worship, because he is a powerful invocatory deity in white magic, exorcisation of evil spirits and power to grant physical powers and magical power to his devotees. His tail is an yantra in white magic in South India and Bengal. Bhima is not deified, as a folk-god, but is considered as a hero, who may be worshipped for acquiring physical strength. Though they have the same father, the characters differ in their association with women. The commen pattern has to be abstracted.

Table-Preheroic Pattern

	Hanuman	Bhima	Remarks
1.	'Birth'-Miraculous 'Father'-Vayu, God	'Birth'-Miraculous 'father'-Vayuswind god	Same father
	"Mother'-Anjana, a monkey	'Mother-Kunti, a married queen	Different mothers-one animal, the other human.
2.	'Adventures as child'- Flies to the sun	Throws up uprooted trees and blocks-Kills demons	Miraculous feats
3.	Joins monkey king Vali and then serves Sugriva. After vali is killed by Rama in favour of the latter ministers to Sugriva	Brother of Yudhistra serves him faithfulld	Serves a king as helper in battle
4.	Goes in search of the wife of his master and kills Ravana, generals and a son who trieds to rape her	Kills Keechaka, who tries to ravish Draupathi, the common wife of the Pandavas	
5.	Destroys Lanka with fire, but the park where Sita stays is spared.	Saves his brothers and their wife, while the palace where they stay is set fire to by the enemies	Saves women from fire
6.	Revives the unconscious brother of the hero and others bound in powerful astra	Helps to save the lives of his brothers and wife from the plots of enemies	

	Hanuman	Bhima	Remarks
7.	Crosses the sea to discover the place where his master's wife is imprisoned by Ravana	No crossing of the sea.	
8.	A brahmachari-Kills the guard demon of Lanka	Has sexual associations with demons-Fathers their sons.	
9,	Fights war without iron weapons -Uses his physical strength and club in battle.—The tail is used to kill.	Fights war without iron weapons-Uses his physical strength-Kills Jarasanda by his physical strength on the counsel of Krishna	
10.	Pulls out trees and rocks to throw on the enemies	Pulls out trees and rocks to throw on enemies	Resembles preheroic greek heroes
11.	Has knowledge of Vedas and is considered wise	Not learned in Vedas -He has no intellectual abilities.	Intellectual culture
12.	Does not cook food	Cooks food for his brothers	Not a warrior hero's task-A *tribal task*
13.	Has monkey form	Has prodigious human form	Physical gigantism
14.	Can assume prodigious form to fly over the sea	Has permanent prodigious form	

	Hanuman	Bhima	Remarks
15.	Has magical prowess derived from his devotion to Rama.	Has physical prowess derived from his birth	
16.	Attains deathlessness by the blessings of Sita	Dies with his brothers	Religions deliverance for Hanuman

Both Hanuman and Bhima were sons of Vayu, the wind god. In spite of their prodigious forms, they could fly in the air, uproot trees and rocks and throw them just like the stormy wind. The strength and the prowess they possessed was inherited from their father the God of Wind. They were born of human or semi-human mother, before they were married to a human husband. They possessed no iron weapons of the mythological epoch like Indra, Rudra, Kartik, Rama and Arjuna. This fact would indicate that they were conceived of as people who lived in the age when iron weapons were not known. They used rocks andtrees, and clubs made of wood. Their magical prowess was evident from their metamorphic ability, which was inherent in them at birth. Though one of them bore man-animal form, his thoughts and actions were human. The magical hero was half humanised in birth and fully humanised in the mental make up. Since they were set in the heroic age of bow and arrow, spear and sword, the original type of Samson and Hercules underwent a modification retaining their miraculous birth, hyperbolic physical prowess and magical prowess like metamorphic ability. Hanuman, despite his animal form, appears to have attained a higher stage of humanisation than Bhima, this being evident from his cultural attainments. Both of them serve conquering emperor heroes Rama and Yudhishtra. A process of humanisation of the tribal hero type is evident, when they are removed from the original social milieu to a new social milieu of a more higher developed social environment.

The heroes of the earliest epics Ramayana and Mahabharata were qualitatively different from the Hanuman, Bhima type. The values they reflected were those of the epoch of empire formation. An elite had already emerged who directed their energy and armed might towards expansion of the territory over which they ruled. Rama was a descendant of a line of kings who were later panegyrised in Raguvamsa, whose genealogy was derived from Surya, the Sun god. But in Valmiki he was the son of a king of a human mother, the element of miraculous birth reduced by the introduction of a human mother, though her conception was described as miraculous. The royal elite projected their values through Rama the conquering hero. He was the original prototype of the emperor hero, who lefts home for many years only to return after securing supremacy over many kingdoms by conquest or diplomacy. Rama and his adversaries were skilled in archery indicating that they were heroes of the iron age.

Rama was born of a king to a queen. Krishna rose from tribal origins to kingship. His image retained certain feautures of the tribal hero. But he left these features behind, when he was set in the social milieu of the royal strata later in the development of his image. His early life betrayed his tribal origin.

1) Association with cows as a divine cowherd

2) His musical talents to play on the flute

3) He killed two demons while still an infant

4) He subdued a snake-monster Kaliya

5) He killed an elephant Kuvalayapita

6) His birth in a cow-shed

7) Human father and human mother

8) Supplanter type of nephew in matrilinear society

9) Bringing up in a different family other than that of his parents, by a foster-mother and foster-father. In his early age he did not make use of iron weapons.

10) Protection of cattle from the heavy rains sent by Indra to destroy the cattle of the tribe that had adopted him.

11) Lifting a mountain and holding it is as an umbrella to protect cows from rain.

These elements of the Krishna image had made epic scholars to infer his tribal origin. They were clearly values of a postoral society.[30]

The tribal image of Krishna underwent complete transformation when it was introduced into the Mahabharata setting of social life and royal battles for imperial status. The tribal image, losing its tribal values, acquired the values of the elite of the epic epoch.[35]

Krishna's life falls into four main parts.

1) 'Childhood' - when he performed great feats of strength

2) 'Youth' - when he danced with cow-girls.

3) 'Manhood' - when he performed the task for which he was born.

4) 'Middle Age' - when he became the great ruler of Dwaraka and took part in Bharata war, acting as Arjuna's charioteer and pronouncing his great teaching on the subject of Dharma or Bhakti.

The first two stages of his life, childhood and youth exhibit tribal conceptions. In his manhood and middle age, the values of the royal elite are projected in the image of the hero.

It has to be noted that Krishna is not one of the fighting heroes like Arjuna, but a charioteer and a helper of the conquering type of hero. Still he reflects the ethical values of the warrior heroes of the elite.

Rama is the image of the typical supreme hero of the earliest heroic age, towering high above the Mahabharata heroes. The Mahabharat hero, Arjun has his equal adversary Karma and a csore

of other heroes fighting on the side of his enemies. But Rama is the self-sufficient supreme hero reflecting the values of the elite of a late age. I agree with the view of scholars who place certain episodes of Bharata as having had their origins as folk oral versions before Vyasa, the compiler collected and integrated them into a prodigious epic. Thus certain episodes in the life of Bhima and Krishna could have existed before the episodes of their later life, as portrayed in the epic. Arjun, Karna and other archer-warriors are the dominant hero-type of the iron age. The image of the preheroic age is modified in the later heroic age in accordance with the new values of the new heroic age.

Krishna, Bhima and Hanuman of the later heroic age bear the birth-marks of their tribal origin even after modification of their tribal image in the light of the values of the heroic age. We cannot fail to note the transition from tribal image of heroes to Mahabharat image and finally to Ramayana image.

Type I Generalised Tribal hero	Type II Krishna	Type III Arjuna	Type IV Rama
1. Son of supernatural father of human or animal mothers	Born of fugitive parents of the supplanter type	Son of supernatural father to an unmarried woman	Miraculous conception Natural birth.
2. Miraculous feats	Childhood Miraculously killed many Asuras sent by Kamsa to kill him	Learns wisdom and skills	Learns wisdom and skills
3. Helper and lieutenant to the warrior hero	Helper and counsellor to warrior hero	Warrior hero	Warrior hero

Type I Generalised Tribal Hero	Type II Krishna	Type III Arjuna	Type IV Rama
4. Fights and kills to protect woman's honour	Himself dallies with cowgirls and marries several wives	Many wives and amorous adventures with numerous love partners	Only one wife High sense of sexual morality Monogamic ideal-Kills, those who tran-rsgress it
5. Saves women from fire	Rescues women from giants, snake-gods		Rescues wife by killing the captor in battle
6. Brahmachari	Dalliance with cow-girls	Philanderer ideal	Monogamic ideal-Ekapatni Vrata-Faithful to his wife
7. Gigantic physical form temporary or permanent	Normal human form	Normal human form	Normal human form
8. Power derived from physical strength and magic or shakti	I stage, just tribal new II stage image of a diplomat and teacher of Dharma	Power derived from use of new weapons skills learned	Power derived from new weapons - Skills learned
9. No personal aspirations Serves master faithfully Marriage by seizure	No master Helps warrior hero Partisan 16008 wives	Warrior hero Many wives Obtains wives by seizure, contest, trickery and mutual love	One wife won in contest

Type I Generalised Tribal hero	Type II Krishna	Type III Arjuna	Type IV Rama
10. Hanuman attacks deathlessness through bhakti Others die	Dies Human mortality killed by splinter	Dies Human mortality	Dies Human mortality
11. Defied	defied	Not defied	Defied

In birth, there is gradual transition from the miraculous to the natural. In mental make up, the tribal hero undergoes modification according to pattern.

The evolutionary stages of the hero images were not quantitive increases of trait elements, more of this, less of that. Since the images are constructions of the human social consciousness of an epoch, they change according to the changes in social consciousness. These changes depend upon two factors.

Horizontally-on changes in material life, namely change in social formation.

Vertically-on historical development of ideas and their interactions in different social epochs.

Both horizantal and vertical changes mutually influence each other. But the horizontal changes are basic changes in social being that reflects itself in social consciousness of the epoch and modifies it. The old and the new exist in a dialectically contradictory dynamic equilibrium. Thus social consciousness is made up of contradictory elements in unity in a social septem which is a unity of opposities.

In India at the horizontal level of an epoch, say, the Rama epoch, all the older images of hero exist in contradiction to the new

image that has emerged and tends to become dominant. Thus the horizontal transformation tends to modify the vertical historical trends of imagination, Thus in the Rama epoch, type IV is the developing trend, suitable to the changed conditions of the social being; and so the current social being reflects itself in ths images that are produced in the social consciousness of the men living in the epoch. Since the society is dominated and directed by the ruling warrior class, the values reflected in the hero image commonly are those of the warrior ruling class. In the Rama epoch the conquering warrior hero is the type that suits their social and cultural values and group interests. The older hero images are judged on the scale of the new values. They are modified to be in line with the new or subordinate to them.

This will be quite evident from a study of the heroes of classical cultures. The image patterns of an epoch differs qualitatively from those of the older epochs, but preserving within it the trait that was dominant in the old images as minor aspects of the image.

Bhima image in Mahabharata is the archetype of the tribal hero, but a convex mirror image of the old image reflected through cultural values of the warrior or hero-epoch. The modified tribal hero image co-exists with Warrior hero images, but in subordinate positions, The warrior heroes are the main heroes who receive support from the manual strength of the Bhima type and Hanuman type (generalised tribal type). Their devotion to the collective is substituted by their devotion to an individual who embodies the dominant values of the ruling class. Thus the tribal values of physical might and magical power are placed under the service of the warrior hero. Bhima serves his brothers with his physical strength. He is denuded of the shamanistic powers of the archetype. Here is an omission of a tribal trait of character, so that the image moves in the direction of the trend of humanisation. Human advances more along the path of humanisation than Bhima by his dcquirement of knowledge of Vedas and Dharmasastras. Rama himself introduces Hanuman to his brother as a sage well-versed in Vedas, state craft and Dharmasastras. He fulfils the Brahmachari ideal of a scholar. Bhima excels only in physical strength.

The high valuation of physical power is newly combined with knowledge from books. Bhima remained a champion of physical powers, but Hanuman had acquired 'wisdom', the power of assuming small or huge forms at will. He is promoted to membership of the elite by imparting to him knowledge of Dharmasastras and the Vedas, considered in the period of composition of the epics as the highest degree of achievement. Still he was not completely transformed into the new type; because he was not trained in the use of the new weapons, the sword and bow and arrow. It was the same with Bhima too. His image is nearer to the archetype, because he lacks the cultural attainments of Hanuman.

The warrior-hero of the Mahabharata epoch is the archer of the elite group. Though it presents a gallaxy of warrior-heroes, Arjuna and Karna, are held up as the greatest heroes of the type. Krishna in Mahabharata is a helper and counsellor to the Pandavas. His childhood and youth described in Bhagavata makcs clear his tribal associations; and the origin of the myths surrounding his image reflect values of the Yadhava tribe of an earlier chronological period.

Krishna was born of Vasudeva and Devaki, fugitives from the cruelty of Kamsa a cousin of Devaki. There was a prophecy that Kamsa would be killed by her son. He had all the seven sons born to her killed. The eighth was Krishna who was saved by his father by exchanging him for a child born on the same day to Nanda, a Yadhava Chief. This myth about his childhood make him a supplanter in the tribal lore' pointed out by Fraser[81]

All the miraculous deeds attributed to tribal heroes are found in the story of his life. He kills Sakatasura, Putana when still a baby, and a host of other demons sent by Kamsa to kill him. To mention only a few; Trivavarta, the whirlwind demon, Vatasura, the girl demon, Vgrasuna, the man-devouring demon, Sankasma, a yaksha demon, Chanusa, the wrester, a bull demon and an elephant demon. He kills demons and mighty humans and animals through his supernatural and magical powers, that were inherent in him from birth. This is another instance that strengthens the view,

that he was originally the god of the Yadhava tribe. His miraculous abilities are used by him to save the cattle of his tribe and to save his tribe from the wrath of Indra the king of Gods. That marks him out as a non-Aryan god. At the same time he killed Asuras, the enemies of the Devas. Asuras in Mahabharata were only super-natural murderers in the service of Kamsa, whose father was an Asura. The Kamsa-Krishna conflict suggests tribal enmity and incessant conflicts among the tribes. Supernatural killing agents are quite well-known among the ancient tribes.

Another aspect of his youth as described in Bhagavata is his dalliance with cow-girls.

"Krishna's amorous adventures began when he was young and developed naturally from his childhood (teasing of the cow-girls). One day when a group of them, already pining away with love for him, went bathing in the river Jamuna, in an attempt to make his wishes come true, Krishna came across them as they were calling out his name. He stole their clothes and hid them in a tree, Despite their earlier passion, the cow-girls were mortified at the situation and tried to hide their nakedness beneath the water; but Krishna told them that Varuna inhabited the water and so they were no better off in it. He insisted that each of the cow-girls come forward to the tree to receive back her clothes. Sending them away after all the teasing, Krishna mortified them by promising that he would dance with them in the following autumn[32]

The description of Krishna's amorous escapades with cow-girls bears comparison with such practices of the modern Indian tribes and the premarital sex-life of Trobrianders.[37] The laxity of sexual morality of the hero, according to the values of the Rama age, conflicts with the tribal values of morality. Krishna's tribal affiliation is most evident from his association with cow-girls. His black complexion, in contrast to Indra the Aryan god and to Brahmins, identifies him as a non-Aryan tribal hero. The first two strata of the composite image of Krishna has unmistakable tribal heroic traits.

This image, having become immensely popular centuries later, was adopted into the epic image of the heroic age. The image had to shed a few traits that directly contradicted the values

of the iron age heroes. Still the most fascinating elements were retained. New attributes were accredited to the old image and the modified image was portrayed in Mahabharata. The modification was in the direction of incorporating the Krishna image into the new gallaxy of hero images of the new age. The Balakrishna image, (the youthful Krishna) having attracted admiration, had to be retained and a respectable adult image had to be built on its base. This was done by Vyasa by investing his adulthood with the roles of cunning diplomat, counsellor and preceptor as he could not be moulded into the warrior-hero type divesting him of his tribal character of c h i l d h o o d and youth. His early life appeals to the fancy of the masses and his role as philosopher and guide appeals to the elite. Still in the epoch of transformation, he was not one of the chief warrior heroes of Mahabharata. But the transformed image bore new appurtenances to suit the new values. The special prerogative of the Brahmin, counselling the kings and teaching Dharma was endowed on him. To suit his new superior roles, he was elevated to a divine status. His tribal characteristics were sublimated in the new light of divine status. Yet his mortality contradicts his divine status. Significantly he dies of a wound caused by an iron splinter from an arrow-head. The new weapon made of iron proves too powerful for the divine hero.

The main ideal hero of the epoch is the bow-wielding warrior-hero. Arjuna, significantly called 'Vijaya', (the conqueror) is the supreme hero of the age. Like the heroes of the Trojan War, he had his peers in the opposite camp. He is unlike Rama the supreme divine hero, against whom his enemies are powerless. He resembles Arjuna in wielding the bow and arrow, but differs from him in being a peerless hero of the epic.

Arjuna image departs from the Krishna image in the use of bow and arrow, the weapons of the iron age. His power is derived from the most powerful arrows he acquires by means of his own efforts. He obtains them from Indra and Siva. The former gifts him with powerful arrows, when he welcomes him in the world of the Devas. Paasupatha is given him after severe tapas devoted to Siva. The arduous efforts, directed towards acquiring the weapons, would suggest the highest value attached to them in the

age of Mahabharata. The donar-object combiniation of fairy-tale pattern is evident here. But the object in itself has magical properties. Its power becomes manifest only in the deserving hands of the hero. Hence the modified pattern has a different significance from that in the fairy-tale type II. He is a chivalrous hero, who punishes his cousin Duryodhana, who dared to insult his wife Droupathi. Talents of all his allies are directed to help him in his endeavour. Krishna, the divine avatar is no exception. Krishna of the modified image is his close friend, helper, counsellor and preceptor. Bhima's physical prowess are pressed into his service; the abilities of Bhima and Krishna serve the interests of the warrior-hero and his class. All the warrior heroes have human bodies and cherish the values of the elite group of the ruling class. There adversaries are their cousins, both in kinship and in class-interests. But the general values of the class are better served by the triumph of the epic-heroes than by their enemies. The enemies lose their kingdoms and territories to those who fight to uphold the interests of the elite class, gaining popularity among their class by following the elite Dharma better than their enemies.

The surviving traits in Arjuna image is his polyandrian and polyguamian married life. He marries Droupathi, winning her in a trial of skill in archery for princess of the royal class. It is a form of marriage among Kshatryas in Varna society. Many pre-Varna forms of marriage are contracted by him. He marries thousands of women from all classes of society, though he prefers princesses. His wandering life for fouteen years affords him opportunities to visit many kingdoms and marry numerous women. His marriages are not confined to the epic age. Folk-poets of the South delight in marrying princesses of their countries to him as late as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In Tamil Nadu he has three wives Alli, a Pandya princess, Pavalakkoti a Chera princess and Minnaoli a Chola princess. Thus he is described as a figure whose amiable nature forced him to marry thousands of women from different cultural and linguistic areas of India. He exhibits not only abundant vigour, but an admirable capacity to free himself from the Aryan prejudices of caste and race (Varna, Aryan and Dasyu races). Polyandric marriages of Arjuna is a sure indication of the descent of his image from tribal conception. His mother bore five children

to five gods but none to her husband. His wife was the common wife of the five Pandavas. This would have been considered as a slur on his character in the age of monogamy, the ideal hero of the age created by the epic being Rama. Arjuna resembles Krishna in his standards of sexual morality. What is the point of departure from the tribal hero image to the warrior-hero of the epic image? It is his supreme skill in archery, which is learned by long years of studentship under a Brahmin Guru and his arduous efforts of tapas to acquire powerful weapons, Brahmastra, Pasupatha and Gandiva from the gods of the Trinity. He has a miraculous birth, but born of a human mother indicating the survival of matriarchal descent. But sons of Kunti bear the family name of Pandava derived from the name of their father.

These elements of the image show that the new warrior image preserves the tribal modes of acquirement of sex-partners and different forms or marriage. It is approved by the great preceptor and author of Bhagavat Gita who actually lends his support to Arjuna to abduct girls and to inveigle women into the snares he laid for them. All his wives are assigned the adopted kinship status of sisters to Krishna. It indicates strong traces of tribal kinship relations.

Partially emancipated from tribal moorings, Arjuna image moves away from it towards the warrior conquering hero type with high aim of building an empire based on elite Dharma. The conflict of values of the past and the present rises to a high pitch when he faces his cousins, uncles, teachers on the side of the enemy and his task to kill them all to win the throne from Yudhistra The Bhagavat Gita divested of all its metaphysical outgrowth reduces itself to a conflict between outdated tribal values and the royal class values projected in the new values and ethics of the warrior-heroes. This conflict is resolved by the mentor of the rising group of imperial heroes in favour of the new values. Kinship and tribal affinities are cut asunder in favour of acquisition of an empire. The Duty of a Kshatriya is to fight for glory. It is ignorance to grieve over the death of kith and kin whom one has to kill in performance of Kshatriya duty. For Brahma Vidya teaches the Brahmins and Kshatriyas that Atma is eternal and the body alone perishes. To destroy the body is no sin, if it is done in the

spirit of Nishkamya (desireless state of mind). It is class interests and values that prevail over tribal kinship abilities. The transformation of the image is complete having shed all its tribal attributes.

Rama is the ideal hero of the warrior class with imperial a'ms. He is born of a conquering hero, who has taken part in the battle between Indra and the Asuras. He has himself fought against the Asuras, using bow and arrow and riding in a horse-drawn chariot that could fly in all directions. His image has tribal associations in that he had thirty-thousand wives and three royal queens. But Rama is associated with the cloud in colour. He marries the daughter of the earth, obviously myths of the agricultural tribes move more and more towards the image of tha bow-wielding warrior-hero shedding traces of tribal characteristics and acquiring the basic characteristics of the new values of the group that creats heroes the imperial warrior group of the elite.

Rama's early life which differs from that of Krishna, is devoid of all tribal features. He is the son and heir of an emperor. He has a long student-career under Vasishta, the royal priest. He goes with Viswamitra to protect Rishis performing an yagna, kills and wounds the Asuras who try to make it impure. He kills a demon Thataka. He marries Sita in much the same way as Arjuna marries Droupathi, winning in a trial of skill in archery. He qualifies for heroism by killing a number of demons and demonesses before his father decides to crown him king. This decision has to be reversed because of the intervention of Dasaratha's third wife, since she wanted to secure the throne for her son Bharata. Rama with his wife and brother leaves home and spends fourteen years in the forest. His battles with the Asuras and Vali and the protection he gives to yagna-performing Brahmins are preparations for the main triumph of his life, the killing of Ravana, the destruction of anti-dharmic. Asura empire and his ascension to the throne as Dharmamurthi (the incarnation of Dharma).

His marriage and sex-life are based on monogamic values. His father Dasaratha is a projection of the customs and values of a previous epoch in which the king married many wives from the families of his feudatories and princesses from royal families allied to him. Dasaratha has thirty-thousand wives and three queen-

wives. The conflict in succession arises out of the king's promise to crown the son of Kaikeyi, who had driven his car, when he fought a battle against the Asuras, and the traditional law of succession, according to which the throne had to pass to the eldest son of the king. But the eldest son of the first queen Kosala is Rama, the hero of the epic. Kaikeyi demands fulfilment of his promise, when the king decides to crown Rama, King. This leads to the banishment of Rama and the death of Dasaratha. Bharata, in whose favour the crown was secured by Kaikeyi, refuses to accept it. He goes to Rama and implores him to accept it. Rama refuses and requests him to rule as his deputy for the fourteen years of his exile. Rama, being the embodiment of Dharma of the new age, gives up his right to the throne and goes to live in the forest for fourteen years. He obtains several powerful weapons to augment his power to fight against the Asuras, the enemies of the Rishis and finally against Ravana, who carries away his wife.

He is by far the excellant warrior-hero, but of a new type. He fights for the interests of his whole class and strengthens it through victory in war and also by winning friends through support to their claims against their ruling kinsmen. He ascends the throne after fourteen years of wars of conquest, by which he had become a emperor-hero.

Rama's epic traits have to be compared with those of Krishna and Arjuna to discover the new values of his age in the estimation of epic-hero. His image is evolved from those of the earlier epochs, but absorbs many new values, so that it suits the values of the age of Rama.

The question whether Mahabharat or Ramayana was composed earlier is relevant for our study, because the images of the heroes of Mahabharat and Ramayana were comprised of values and concepts of heroism, that had existed before the epics were written down. From knowledge of social development, it is possible to distinguish older elements from later elements. Similarly from the weapons the heroes bear, their ethical concepts, their sexual behaviour and marriage and their methods of securing friends we can decide on their image. So it is sufficient to compare

the traits, values and actions of the heroes of the two epics in order to discover how far Rama image is similar to the older images and also differs from them.

Such a comparison has been made in the Table. His birth is not attributed to any supernatural deities as in the case of Arjuna The yaga and yagna for his birth and the three wives of Dasaratha are a simple device to mark out Rama and his brothers as special types of men differing from other men in birth and ability. Such a device is followed in folk-epics too, introducing a formula of tapas or vrata for the birth of the hero. His birth is quite natural as that of Krishna. He has a period of apprenticeship for his future heroism in study and practice of arms. His senior apprenticeship was under Viswamitra, a Kshatriya Rishi, who was learned in philosophical wisdom and also dexterous in arms. He learns wisdom from Vasishta and Viswamitra and receives arrows from Rishis who present them to him. They choose Rama to destroy their enemies and augment his power by their present. The donor-obiect formula is much changed here. The donors are those who would benefit, if the objects are entrusted to Rama who will kill the Asuras, their enemies. It is mutually beneficial, for Rama also will benefit, as he will seize the territory occupied by the Asuras after killing them. His battle with the Asuras and their destruction is a prelude to his battle with mighty Ravana. He wins his bride in a contest proving his superiority over heroic princes of his age. The most important point of departure in the image of the hero, is his strong monogamic marriage. That separates him from other warrior-heroes. His father himself is an example of polygamian husband, who had to die because of conflict in succession between his sons by two wives. Monogamic marriage of kings is held up as an ideal in the epic. That value is based on the desire of the royalty to avoid internal dissensiom and fratricidal war, that will weaken the ruling class as it did in the Mahabharat War.

Krishna is no warrior hero, he is only a mentor of the warrior hero-Arjuna. But Rama is both a warrior hero and a mentor and combines in himself heroism and wisdom. He is a mentor to his brothers and friends. Above all he represents the

values of his age and preemniently reflects the values of the ruling class and its top stratum of royalty. The values and traits of Rama, exhibited in the epic, has captured the admiration of the Hindus throughout the ages so much, that Mahatma Gandhi wanted Rama Rajya to be established after India became free. But it is to be remembered that Rama image is the socio-historical ideal product of an age when history was believed to be made by heroes or avators and man was just to reconcile himself with fate.

Valmiki's Rama was just a prince who grew up to be a hero by his own training and achievements. But in the epics of later versions, Rama was transformed into an incarnation of Vishnu following the ten incarnation (incarnation of Vishnu in Vishnu Purana and the Dasavatara stories).

A few Puranic heroes are really warrior heroes of the previous epochs. But Puranas devoted to Vishnu of Sakthi or creations of Siva from his forehead eye make these deities the central figure with super-human power, against which human struggle is useless. No human hero can emulate such avatars. They could simply be meditated up to grant powers to human beings. But Puranic heroes need no human helpers. They successfully carry out feats of strength or power that is impossible for men. A few of the heroes, who were deified by the Vaishnavites and Saivites, became sectarian heroes, admired and worshipped by them.

How are we to account for the fact that Hahn Raglan and Bowra have found a relatively stable biographical pattern among heroes of various cultures? First it should be noted that these heroes have been chosen from almost exclusively classical cultures, with a predominantly Greek and Roman bias. The occassional addition of an Egyptian, Indian or Persian name to avoid just this critcism does little to affect the already established cultural hegemony (Blackburn). I have attempted in the foregoing to indicate the evolution of warrior-hero type from the tribal hero type to the Rama type of the epic age. The evolution and the stages of transformation reveal how the changing values of the ruling class in different epochs are reflected in the hero images, transforming the old image, preserving a few elements relevant to the new social being of the elite and shedding a few other elements that have

become archanic and above all inducting new elements based on new values and concepts of the new era. This involves the complex process of selection of the old, that will not contradict the new, and transformation according to the new values and new concepts of the new epoch.

"The heroes of Hahn Raglan and Bowra are similar only when they are drawn from the same epochs such as tribal, classical or heroic and comparison made. Not only are these heroes similar (Raglan heroes) because they have been selected from culturally similar traditions, but also because they represent a similar class of heroes and thus reflect the values of a particular segment of society,"(Blackburn). This segment is the culturally and socially dominant group in particular historical epochs of these similar cultures. The congruence of their class values is in fact greater than the difference between their cultures. They are elite privileged groups in the dominant class of a social formation. The class origins of these heroes is the elite groups of the ruling class. "They are princes, knights, religious leaders, people in positions of power in slave or feudal society. At least in India many of them are deified, cults develop and are integrated into the religion of the court pantheon as ideas of status quo" (Blackburn)

A brief explanation is necessary to elucidate this statement with reference to the Indian puranic and epic heroes The main heroes without exception originated from the royal group of the ruling class. Arjuna was the son of King Pandu, of the junior line of Karma of Hastinapur. Krishna was the supplanter heir to the Yadhava kingdom, who had claim to the throne, being the sister's son of Kamsa. Rama was the son of Dasaratha, the king of Kosala. The minor heroes of the epics were all independent heroes or types of the previous tribal epoch. But they were associated with the heroes of royal origin as their subalterns. Bhima, the prodigy of physical strength, became a helper of Arjuna his brother, both of them of royal parentage. Hanuman had a less noble origin; but had to become a lieutenant of Rama, the warrior for the manifestation of powers of his body and tail. Those who oppose the superiority of the heroes are killed in fights. A few of the villain type are invested with a few heroic qualities, like proficiency in weapons or magical power to serve as foils to the classical.

Part Two: Folk-Heroes

The Hahn Raglan type of hero has his counterpart in Indian Purana and folk-tale. They be'ong to the elite groups of the feudal society of the past. The existence of another type of hero, the local hero or folk-hero representing the lowest stratum of society, has recently been brought to light through the efforts of a few folklore scholars in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. The classes that patronise the puranic hero are the same that control education, the mass media and publishing houses. The local heroes reflect values and concepts of their own class and groups, which the elite do no find distasteful. They are not willing to accept the local hero as a hero at all. Since scholars have neglected folklore in general, as the creation of their servants and slaves to be vulgar and obscene, they are interested in suppressing the local hero tradition. In spite of their efforts to erase the memory of local heroes, sometimes the stories of local heroes become popular, gaining currency not only among folks but also among the intermediate strata of society. Then the elite half-heartedly accept the local hero and deliberately attempt to modify the folk-values by substituting their own group values in the image of the local hero.

It is for this reason that the "local heroes" often remain unknown outside their linguistic group in which their stories are told in ballads. The memories of heroes who fought against the British rulers in Tamil Nadu are preserved in folk-ballads, but their names are seldom known outside Tamil Nadu. The names of Velu Tampi, (Kerala) Sangulli Rayanna (Karnataka) and Babasaheb (Karnataka) are not known outside their own liquistic region. The stories of these anti-British fighters could inspire the freedom fighters during freedom struggles. So the elite accepted these folk-heroes and lionised them, singing their glories a century after their noble martyrdom, But the fate of another group of folk-heroes, who sacrificed their lives in the interest of their group or class, challenging class or caste oppression or struggling to throw off social bondage is not so fortunate as those who fought against the British. They are known only in limited areas in which they exhibited their heroism in the struggle against their exploiters and oppressors.

But these local heroes, who are venerated by the folk-singer and his audience, are ignored by the elite even in folklore studies for obvious reasons. These heroes do not belong to their social groups nor do they reflect their social values and hero-concept. It is not surprising that if we apply the Raglan scale of hero to them, most of them will score very low and fail to qualify as heroes. Muthuppattan and Sangulli Rayanna[33] will score 0, while even folk-heroes of elite origin Kattabomman[34] and Kittur Chennamm[35] will score 4-6 out of twenty-two. The failure of the local and folk-heroes to score high in Raglan score is due to the elite bias of the score itself, which is constructed out of the values held in high estimation by the elite ruling class of the feudal society. Folk-values, reflected in the image of local heroes, fall quite outside the values based on class concepts and behaviour of the elite that group worships heroes. Raglan hero is not a universal type, because it is a reflection of the group-consciousness of the above type of groups, all belonging to the higher strata of the society. No one has attempted to construct a scale for evaluating the local and folk-hero, the score points based on the values and concepts of the folk-groups, that make heroes their whole social consciousness arising out of their social-being at any particular period of time in history.

As I have already mentioned, the stories of folk-heroes are unknown beyond their linguistic regions and most of them known only in a limited geographical area within the linguistic region. I shall summarise for the benefit of the reader, a few stories of the local heroes venerated by the folks in particular local regions. The heroism of the local hero is admired by the lowest caste people. The local hero wi'l not be patronised by the higher caste people, who are part of the elite and generally support the ruling class. They will not set the heroic ballads to writing and print them. They are interested only in the popularisation of elite hero-type and if the hero-image of the folk-hero becomes popular, they make attempts to modify these images to suit their aesthetic tastes by sapping the life-blood out of them. Substitutes from the elite-lore is also introduced in folk-art forms to supersede the real folk-hero image. It is therefore clear that the circulation range of the folk-heroic ballads will not extend beyond local areas. Thus Muthuppattan

ballad[36] was in circulation and was current till three decades ago in Tirunelveli District and parts of Kanyakumari District. Chinnatharuli ballad was known only in a limited area around the place of origin of the ballad, Kouthalamatankathai was not known anywhere even in Tamil Nadu, till I published a summary of it. Even now, there is no edited text of the ballad. Chinna Nadan Kathai[37] is known in six villages, where a cult has developed around the hero. Certain ballads and the heroes commemorated in them are known only in one or two villages believed to be associated with the lives of the heroes. Only the heroism of certain heroes which is not opposed to the elite critic's values and has the tendency to support their interests is accepted and popularised by the elite. Modern folklore scholars in Tamil and Kannada are collecting heroic ballads of the folks and are be investigating. The scientific work on folk-heroic ballads may reveal the pattern of the local hero-image, that must be grounded on the narratives of heroic exploits of the local heroes, whom the folks venerate. There are also attempts to absorb cult heroes of the folks in a subordinate status in elite cults of deities associated with Siva family, (Siva, Ganesha, Subrahmanya, Veerabadhra, Parvathi). Successful absorption of folk-cult heroes into the hierarchy of elite pantheon of gods, leads to their popularisation by the elite (Ayyappan in Kerala Madurai Veeran in Tamil Nadu, Yallamma in Karnataka).

First of all I shall deal with the biographic pattern of the local heroes of folk-origin, so that the reader may identify traits and behaviour admired by the folks. Then I shall dwell upon the upward and downward movements of interaction between folk-hero image and elite-hero image and the process of modification and transformation of the images in opposite directions. The resulting elite image is more elite-based and the folk-image, more folk-based thus producing hybrid images. But certain images are so thorougly impregnated with consciousness with all its concepts and values, that it is impossible to modify them without making it inconsistent with itself, that the elite ignore it and let it continue to exist in a limited area of circulation.

In a type of ballads where the heroes have to challenge and transgress the caste-rules of marriage or rise up in the estimation of all sections of the people due to their heroic exploits benefiting

the people, the ruling class meet the challenge by violence and murder. They stop at nothing in their attempt to protect their class-interests and the jati-ethics intending to maintain their dominance over the working masses. I shall assign to this type of ballads number I or name it as Pattan type of ballads.

I shall choose four ballads as instances of this type from Tamil, and three from Kannada folklore from which it will be possible to identify the elements of the heroic concepts of the folks. The following are the instances I propose to take up for study.

From Tamil Folk-ballads :

1. Muthuppattan
2. Chininaththambi
3. Chinnanadan
4. Kouthalamadan

From Kannada Folk-ballads :

5. Chennamma
6. Sinchura Lakshmanna
7. Sangulli Rayanna

I. Muthuppattan Kathai : (Story)

Muthuppattan was a Brahmin youth who quarelled with his father and seven brothers and left home to seek employment with the King of Kottarakkara. His talents won him the favours of the king, who took him in his service. He served the king faithfully. Pattan rose high in the service of Rama Raya and became prosperous. Having heard that their brother had become wealthy, his brothers visited him at Kottarakkara and persuaded him to go with them to their village in Aryanadu, get married and settle there. They asked him to pack up his belongings and follow them. Muthuppattan agreed to their request and started on his journey to his native village. On his way, his brothers went to a public rest home, while he went to the river for performing his evening worship. While he was steeped in mediation, he was mesmerised by the sweet song of two Chakkli girls who were standing knee-deep

in the stream and were taking a drink of water from the river. He fell in love with them. He returned to his brothers and told them that he had fallen in love with the Chakkli girls and had decided to marry them and stay in their cheri the rest of his life. The brothers were shocked at what he said and tried as well as they could to persuade him to follow them home. He refused, telling them that he would stay in the forest with the Chakklis and get married to the girls he had fallen in love.

They thought that it would be a disgrace tot heir Brahmin eminence if their brother married the untouchable girls. They would as well get rid of him. They shut him up in a cave and closed its entrance with a huge slab of stone. Muthuppattan thought of the girls and pushed the slab which rolled down the slope of the hill. Emerging out, he sought out the father of the girls (Valappakatai) and requested him to get his daughters married to him. The Chakkli tried to shake him out of his resolve. Unable to ward him off, he enjoined upon him to observe certain conditions which he thought would put some sense into the crazy Brahmin youth and make him give up his resolve. All that was of no use. Pattan remained firm in his resolution and agreed to fulfil the Chakkli's conditions, a few of them being,

1. to renounce his caste with all its marks. the holy thread and the dress of the Brahmins
2. to tend the cows entrusted to the Chakkli by the farmers of the locality
3. to skin the carcasses and sell the hide
4. to make footwear out of leather
5. to eat cow's flesh and drink liquor
6. to learn their language Telugu

The Brahmin youth successfully completed his apprenticeship, won the good will and love of the Chakklis and married the two Chakkli girls, Bommi and Thimm. It was an occasion of great rejoicing. The Chakklis celebrated the marriage with great joy and

merriment, with song and dance. Pattan was elected chief of the tribe (Perhaps his father-in-law, who was the chief, died or had become too old to bear the burden of his chiefship).

The community of Chakklis, with Pattan with their chief, inhabiting the mountain slopes of Papanasam, were entrusted by the Naick Kings with the responsibility of guarding the passes through which merchant caravans passed between Travancore and Arya Nadu.[1] Bandits used to waylay the caravans and rob them. After Pattan became chief, he armed and trained the Chakklis to fight. So the bandits infesting the locality were thwarted in their efforts to rob the caravans. These bandits were supported and protected by a few Zamindars who used to receive a share in the loot. Both the bandits and their protectors were exasperated, when they found that the low born Chakklis were organised and trained to fight for their cattle. Seeing a threat to their customary means of livelihood from Pattan, they plotted to eliminate him. Acting upon their decision to kill him, they made a sudden raid on the cattle entrusted to Muthuppattan and were making away with them. Muthuppattan, though resting after an illness, immediately jumped into the fray to foil the attempt of the bandits to drive away the cattle entrusted to the care of the Chakklis. Though he was outnumbered by the bandits, he killed all of them except one who had concealed himself under the corpses of the bandits. When Muthuppattan descended the steps on the river bank to wash off the blood-stain on his body and clothes and bent down to reach for the water in the river, the bandit who had remained concealed, rose up and stealthily came from behind Pattan and stabbed him on the back. A hound which always followed him, ran back to the cheri with blood on its muzzle. Pattan's wives were alarmed They followed the hound which led them to the place where he lay dead in a pool of blood. They carried the body, lit a pyreand cremated it. They also fell upon the pyre and died.

The above is a faithful summary of the original traditional version that was surviving for more than 50 years in the form of a ballad, sung on occasions of festivals in the temple dedicated to Muthuppattan, which stands 2 furlongs away from the Papanasam Dam in Tirunelveli District. A few modifications were made by

Muthupulavar, the last of a line of folk-singers, who had a land-grant from the Zamindar of Singampatti to sing the ballad on festival days in the temple. I shall discuss the modifications he made to suit attitudes and tastes of the Brahmins and the Vellalas who began to visit the temple to worship the main god Sorimuthu Ayyanar and the subordinate god Muthupattan (or Pattavaroyan).

Blackburn remarks, "The skeleton story is universal enough-journey to another land, tasks performed for marriage villains, monsters slain." However the tasks are skipped over completely and the battle commands but a few lines. Incredibly, though a hero to the singer and the audience, he scores a resounding zero out of Raglan's 22 points. It is the focus and the nature of this heroism, that distinguishes the ballad from other types, the epic and the puranic. In fact, the very essence of this story is the hero's renunciation of the status and courtly connection (that define other heroes). Moreover his marriage to the untouchable women strikes at the very heart of the caste hierarchy, which the puranic heroes and their patrons benefit from and support. Finally he is a hero, because like those commemorated in the stone-inscriptions[40] he defended against marauding cattle-thiefs, protecting the property of his father-in-law.

I agree with the above remarks of my friend and pupil, stuart Blackburn. I shall just modify his remarks with only a few remarks of mine.

Pattan scores zero in Raglan's scale, indicating that the scale is not suitable to measure his heroism. The universal biographic pattern has only formal similarity, the content of each of the motifs being entirely different from those of the Bowra or Raglan hero type. I shall dwell on that point.

1. Journey to another land. In Pattan's case it is a break with Brahmin orthodoxy and social eminence.

2. Tasks performed for marriage — Unlike in the folk-tales and puranas, he loves Chakkli girls, fulfils the conditions of the father of the girls to renounce the marks of his caste, agrees to join their low caste and dedicates himself for their uplift. He

organises them to fight against bandits. He dies in a fight against bandits who tried to steal the cattle belonging to the farmers who had entrusted them to the Chakklis for herding. He dies fighting against the common enemies of his tribe and the farmers. He dies not for "personal glory and delight in battle", like Bowra heroes, but to relieve the cattle frcm cattle thiefs. His marriage is not for personal advantage nor a step to achieve a personal aim, but just for human love. He emancipates himself from the social ethics of the Brahmin superiority and merges himself in one untouchable community, claiming no privilege for himself, but serving it with his talents and strength. Certainly the formal motif of hero image has to be applied in an entirely different meaning to this folk-hero from that of Bowra hero. Comparing the movements of the biographical pattern of the folk-tale hero with that of the Bowra hero, the following scheme will emerge.

BOWRA TYPE EPIC HERO	MUTHUPPATTAN
1. Superior physical power and skill in a new weapon	1. None
2. Emancipates from domination of magical power	2. None
3. Recognised from birth as extra ordinary human being	3. Not so
4. Journey from a place different from his place of birth	4. He leaves his Brahmin eminence and seeks livelihood with a ruler - Short stay in court.
5. His vitality sharpens his thirst for battle.	5. He does not wish for glory in war.
6. A preparation for and achievement in a heroic deed, wins glory.	6. He does not wish for glory.

BOWRA TYPE EPIC HERO	MUTHUPPATTAN
7. Disastrous choice and disastrous mistake	7. Choice of a girl of untouchable caste is a disastrous one, cause of his death
8. Builds a city	
9. Deposes a king	
10. Becomes a king	
11. Dies in battle	11. Yes. But does not die for chivalrous desire.

The comparison of biographic patterns of the elite hero with the folk-hero reveals only formal similarity of structure, but the values reflected are projections of values of different and mutually cpposed classes.

The Story of Chinnanadan :

The story of Chinnanadan is a conflict between right of inheritance and inter-caste love.

Chinnanadan, otherwise known as Kumaraswamy was the sole heir to the properties of his father and four uncles. His father's sister was his only aunt, whose only daughter was married to him when she was two years old and he was eighteen. When he was twenty years old, he fell in love with Ayyamkutti, a young woman of the barber caste and lived with her in the outskirts of his town. His father and uncles took no objection to his love affair, since relations of concubinage was not forbidden to youths of wealthy families. But trouble started when his wife attained puberty. Her parents wanted to send her to her husband's house. The father and uncles of Chinnanadan demanded that he should sever his relations with Ayyamkutti, return to his parental home, live with his legal wife and inherit the property of the five brothers and their

sister. Chinnanadan refused to recognise his aunt's daughter as wife for considerations of inheritance as his real wife, and declared that he would for ever live with Ayyamkutti and her children through him. They threatened to disinherit him. He would not be intimidated. They reported the matter to their overlord the Zamindar of Nattathi and asked for his advice. He would not interfere in their family affair and asked them to settle the affair just as they wished. He promised to support them. They went back to Chinnanadan's house and murdered him in cold blood to save their caste and their families from ignominy. Both Ayyamkutti and Chinnanadan's wife committed suicide. A cult exists in five villages in which, there are temples dedicated to the deified hero and heroines of the ballad around Eral, a small town in Tirunelveli-District, Tamil Nadu.

This hero also will score zero in Raglan scale. What criteria make him a hero in the folk-mind ? Even the universal biographic pattern for the hero is absent in this story. The hero counterposes humanistic love to inheritance of property and transgresses caste rules of marriage and the custom of child marriage with a view to secure property. He refuses to worship the all-powerful goddess of wealth and prefers to uphold human bonds of love. For refusing to do just that, he is sacrificed on the altar of property by his own father.

The conflict between human bonds of love and socially recognised marriage in the context of inheriting property and concentrating it in one heir, results in father upholding property values, and son standing firm upon human values is resolved by the triumph of property values in a society dominated by property relations.

Chinnathambi Kathai :

Chinnathambi belonged to the untouchable Chakkli caste. Even while he was a boy, he exhibited powers of physical strength and skill in throwing spear and in archery. The peasants of the region complained to the ruler about frequent depredation of crops by boarns in the mountains. The ruler announced a reward for any one who would go for a hunt in the mountain and kill the

boars. Chinnathambi collected a group of hunters and led them on a hunting expedition. The group killed a large number of boars and returned to report their achievement to the ruler. The ruler had promised to appoint the hunter, who cleared the mountains of wild animals, which descended upon cultivated lands the captain of the garrison guarding the fort at Thirukkurunkuti.|Most unwillingly he appointed Chinnathambi as captain of the fort, replacing a Thalaiwar, who held the post as the hereditary incumbent. He belonged to the warlike caste of Maravas, who were traditionally warriors and constituted the defence troops and police force. The Thalaiwar and his men were jealous of the new appointee. They were waiting for an opportunity to kill him. Thalaiwar approached the ruler's brother-in-law, who was also a ruler in a small province about fifty miles away from the fort where Chinnathambi held the position of the captain of the fort. He incited the greed of the ruler, telling him that there was a treasure buried underground in Pappakkuti, where the ruler lived and that it could be taken out, if he sacrificed a young and heroic youth. He suggested to him to request his brother-in-law to send Chinnathambi to be sacrificed, offering half the share of the treasure to be found. The ruler of Pappakuti did as advised by the Thalaiwar.

The parents of Chinnathambi had arranged his marriage with a young woman he loved, Sonai by name. Preparations for the marriage was in full swing. Just then the ruler of Panakuti sent for Chinnathambi and asked him to go to Pappakuti and help his brother in obtaining a few plants to prepare a drug for his rheumatism. Taken in by the treacherous trick of the two rulers, Chinnathambi went to Pappakuti, where he was sacrificed to a bhuuta who was believed to be guarding over the treasure. Just before he died, he hurled curses against the rulers, who killed nn innocent man, who had served the village clearning the forest of wild animals, which often destroyed the crops. His hound that had followed him ran back to his place of birth with a ring taken from his finger. Chinnathambi's father, mother and his bride came to the spot, saw his body lying mutiliated; and in deep grief and anger they took their lives. The four disembodied souls became ghosts, who destroyed all the men, women and children belonging to the caste of the two rulers.

These spirits were worshipped in peetahs erected at three places, the place of the hero's birth, the place where he was captain and the place where he was killed.

There is a ballad narrating the story; and it has limited circulation in places associated with the events of the stoty in Tirunelveli District.

*He is a hero to the singer and the folks. The story is espe*cially popular among the untouchable classes. The fear in the minds of the ruling families that the talents, strength and courage of the folks might be turned against their domination induces them to get rid of such talented low caste youth by all possible means. In this story greed for treasure plays a part in the minds of the rulers to come to a decision to kill Chinnathambi. Many more stories of this type are narrated in ballad form. But no texts except that of Chinnathambi are available, because no help for collection is forthcoming from Universities or the Government.

Chinnathambi will also score zero along with his fellow heroes Pattan and Chinnanadan in Raglan scale, because the heroism of these heroes is of an entirely different quality. The usual biographical pattern of Bowra or Raglan type of hero is entirely absent in these heroes. Even the formal pattern that agrees with the life story of Muthuppattan does not fit in with the life of Chinnanadan and Chinnathambi. Then what is their claim for heroism ? Mostly their birth was low, they had talents, they put their strength and talents at the service of the (folks) people. When they grew famous and popular, they were killed with direct or indirect participation of the ruling class.

Their oppression of the untouchables could produce a revolt against the social system, which was supported and maintained by the power of the ruling class. So they were always afraid, when talents sprouted among the untouchables, and they rushed to nip them in the bud. The talented untouchable hero (born as untouchable or adopted by them), when he organises the youth of the lowest castes and carries out an exploit (hunting or fighting the bandits) should expect to die at the hands of the ruling class.

Kouthalamadan[39]

A Chakkli girl Poovayi goes everyday to a town seven miles away from her cheri to sell curds and ghee to her customers. A rogue belonging to a higher caste (Marava) waylays her with evil intentions. She escapes everytime, since whenever he attempts to rape her, people of her caste pass by. He grows exasperated, but continues to chase her. A Muslim woman, who usually buys curds and ghee, grows to be fond of the girl for her honesty and good behaviour. Poovayi has to return home late one day. She is afraid that darkness will gather before she reaches her village and Kouthala, the rogue will scretely lie in wait for her. She speaks of her troubles to the Muslim woman, who decides to send her son, a brave youth to chaperon Poovayi to her cheri. Poovayi used to call him Pattani Annan (Muslim brother) He carries a knife to defend himself. As the two are nearing Poovayi's village, Kouthala appears and begins to molest her in the presence of Pattani Annan, who comes, to defend her honour. A fight ensues and both men die. Poovayi is grieved to see that her Pattani Annan who has fought the rogue to save her honour is killed. She pulls out her tongue and thus takes her own life.

The story of Kouthalamadan is full of sublime humanism that transcends barriers of caste and religion. Pattani Annan fights Kouthala not out of jealousy, since he has no sexual attraction for the girl, but out of sympathy and kindness for a girl, who belongs to the oppressed community of Chakkli, against an arrogant rogue who believes that he has a right to sexual pleasure from Poovayi, because she belongs to the lowest caste. Even now it is thought by young men of certain castes, that they have a right to ask Chakkli girls to go to bed with them, and that they shall not refuse. Pattani rebels against such discriminatory and insulting demands of the higher caste youth, unmindful of the risk to his own life.

His supreme sacrifice reminds one of the herostone heroes, some of whom died fighting against bandits or soldiers, to save the honour of women (Chengam herostones).[40]

A class of rural heroes, who with daring and courage rebelled against oppression and discrimination of the elite belonging to the higher castes and their tragic death are commemorated in

lavanis, now in current circulation in North Karnataka. American folklorists may include them in the type called bandit-heroes. But the circumstances that led them to outlaury described in the first section of the ballads, will qualify them to be classified as rebel heroes or heroes of social protest. They refused to accept insulting treatment of their class by the members of the elite.

***The story of Hanuma*[41] :** There is evidence of the widespread custom of zamindars polygars and landlords claiming the right of first night with the brides of their serfs and tenants. I have recorded authentic information from old residents of Zamindari area and polygar principalities and ryotwari villages, where a landlord owned all the cultivable lands in a village, that it was a customary practice for the zamindar or landlord to send a present to the bride on her marriage day which was to be understood as a command to her to go to his house and spend the night with him. No one dared to oppose the infamous custom, because the owner of the land was also believed to be the owner of the serfs and their wives. A revolt against this practice, which led to a direct confrontation between a Gowda landlord and his spirited serf Hanuma, is narrated in a folk-song and is now current among untouchable folks in Dharwar region (Karnataka State]. Hanuma, a young untouchable serf working on the lands belonging to a Gowda boasted that he would not send his bride to the Gowda on the first night after marriage and face all consequences without fear. The boast reached the ears of the Gowda, who growing angry with Hanuma set fire to his house. Hanuma decided to marry and face the challenge and found it necessary to kill the Gowda. His daring and courage inspired the same spirit of revolt in the hearts of the youth against the estsblished customs that offended their human dignity. As the last stanza of the ballad, Billy, the kid has it, (American folk-hero).

"There is many a man with a face fine and fair,

Who starts out in life with a chance to be square;

But like poor Billy, he wanders astray,

And loses his life in the very same way."

But Hanuma was not only supported by his class, but also by the wife of the murdered man. His deed was not looked upon by folks as murder, but as a blow against injustice and insult to them. A desire to live and uphold human decency had sprouted in them. Hanuma bravely and daringly stood in the vanguard and struck the blow. His courage and heroism still inspire the suppressed people to fight against feudal oppression and cruelty. I shall give just two instances of rebels against elite oppression, driven to the wall by the reprisals of the leaders of higher castes, turning into brigands and bandits and meet their inevitable death on the gallows. The instances I have selected are the ballads of Chennanna and Lakshmanna.

Chennanna[42] It was an age long taboo in Thornakkatti village that no low-caste man may ride on a bull or animal, when he passed through the village. He should dismount and walk, leading the animal till he crossed the boundaries of the village. Chennanna, a 'low-born' man defied the taboo and rode on his bullock into the village. The young men of the higher castes stopped him and demanded that he should dismount and lead his bullock along the main street till he reached the limits of the village. They said that even famous low-caste men like Rayanna had not transgressed the ancient custom upheld in the vil'age. He refused to dismount. The villagers pulled him down forcibly from his mount and drove the bullock away. Chennanna rose up like a fury and let out a flood of filthy abuse upon the youth of the village who had insulted him. He vowed to cut off their hair (?) and shave off their moustaches. The youth complained to the viliage Panchayat. The Panchayat being composed of high-caste persons, advised him to apologise for his insolence and promise good behaviour in future. He flouted their advice and defied their decision. He could no more live in the village, because he was opposed to the powerful dominant caste-groups and their leaders. They would harass him and attempt to beat him into submission. He left the village with a few dare devils, who formed themselves into a gang of dacoits. They came down in raids of reprisals against the villagers of Thornakatti, setting fire to hay-stacks and stealing cattle. He was arrested and impriosned with a three-maund fetters on his hands. With the help of Ellappa, mill worker, he escaped from jail custody. The police

search parties were sent out to apprehend him. A reward was put on his head. Sivapur Gowda offered to seize him and hand him over to the police. The boasts of the Gowda reached the ears of Chennanna. He began taking reprisals against the Gowda. He set fire to the hay-stacks belonging to the Gowda, stole his cattle and burgled his house. He shaved off the Gowda's tuft and moustache. Now Gowda, who always helped the police, 'engaged' some men to inform against Chennanna. Chennanna's name struck terror in the hearts of the Gowdas.

Complaints were sent to the highest police-officer of the state about the activities of the dacoit gang of Chennanna. He ordered a strong police detachment to suppress the gang. The police party surrounded Betageri village where Chennanna was reported by the Gowdas to be hiding. He came out of hiding and shot at the police. Outnumbered by policemen, he was shot dead. The ballads conclude with high praise to Chennanna's heroism- "He lives for ever in the hearts of the people".

The hunted social rebel turned to outlawry as a revenge against the high-caste Gowdas, who oppressed the hero's social and caste-group. Though the Gowdas consider the hero as a common bandit and burglar, the rural folks venerated him and conferred heroship on him.

Sinchura Lakshmanna [43] A ballad in lavani-form commemorates the heroism of low-born hero Lakshmanna, who while still in his teens excelled in running and throwing stones and other feats of rural sports. The high-caste youth were jealous of him. He was a youth of high spirits and refused to cringe before the village-officers and the leaders of high-caste groups. He never bowed before insults and threats. The elders of the village called him for interrogation on trumped-up charges. He denied the charges and wanted to leave the chavadi, the village court house. They tried to arrest him using force. He struggled to get himself free, but was outnumbered by the youth of the higher castes, who bound him and handed him over to the police. A charge sheet was laid before a magistrate who remanded him to jail custody. Since he was wounded in his struggle against the village youth, he was sent for medical treatment to the hospital. When he was cured of the wounds he was transferred to prison. His comrades broke the jail

and set him free. He gathered a group of young men around him and left for the forests. A police party was sent to capture them. Hiding behind trees, the bandits threw stones aiming at the knees of horses belonging the police party. The police-officer in charge of the raid-party boasted that he would capture Lakshmanna the next day. Lakshmanna shouted that he would come to the chavadi of Betigeri the next day and the officer might keep himself ready to arrest him. The next night the police were lying in front to capture him. Being tired of waiting for many hours for Lakshmanna, the policemen went to sleep in a grove near the village chavadi. When they were fast asleep, Lakshmanna and his men stole into the village and cut off the tails of the horses and shaved off the moustaches of the policemen. They kicked the boastful police-officer who remained petrified out of terror. They escaped before the police could get ready to seize them. The officer and his servant Ayyanavanna were put to shame. The gang retreated to the hills. Two policemen were sent to obtain intelligence before a police-party could be sent to raid the hills to capture the gang. They boasted that they would cut Lakshmanna to pieces if they met him. As they were saying these words, Lakshmanna appeared before them. The terrified policemen ran away. Lakshmanna caught them, put mud into their mouths, bound them together with a rope and cut off a hand and went straight to the village chavadi. The police were afraid of arresting him.

Unable to capture him and his gang, the police decided to get hold of Lakshmanna by treachery. The police offered a prize to anyone who would help them to capture him. They induced Teggunayaka, a friend of Lakshmanna to help them in capturing him. Teggunayaka who used to meet Lakshmanna in secret, invited him one day to a feast. Without knowing the treacherous intention of the Nayaka, Lakshmanna came to his friend's house with his comrades. A few policemen disguised as villagers were in Nayaka's house. The Nayaka told them that a lamp would be placed before Lakshmanna, while the party sat down to eat. He did so. The policemen pounced upon Lakshmanna and caught him. They bound him and sent a bullet into his heart.

The other members of the gang were also rounded up. Before Lakshmanna died, he cursed the Nayaka and said, "You

have killed me inviting me to your house, You have killed a friend who had come to eat in your house. You will no more eat or drink in peace". The Nayaka was tormented by his conscience and was unable to eat or drink till he died after a few days. The lavani song ends with the words : "Lakshmanna must be born again and again in this land to inspire courage and heroism in the hearts of our people".

Jambulingam[44] A few instances of bandit-hero type are commemorated in ballad form circulated in limited areas in Tamil Nadu (Nanguneri Taluk, Tirunelveli District). The most widely known of them is Jambulingam, who was killed by the police about fifty years ago.

He belonged to the Nadar caste and came of poor parents who worked as serfs on the lands belonging to a rich Muslim of Panagudi who claimed descent from an officer of the Moghul army and who had settled there having received a grant of land for his services to the emperor. He was called Dorai (lord) by the people. The young men of the family were all philanderers who would catch hold of any woman of the lower castes and have their pleasure on them. There was no limit to the atrocities committed by them in the region over which their family reigned supreme. Though the British government was the ruling power, the Muslim landlords wielded real power of life and death over the people of the region.

Jambulingam hailed from a village in the neighbourhood of Panagudi. The women folk related to him used to go and work in the fields owned by the Muslim family. Jambulingam was trained in fencing with sticks and swords and in wrestling. He taught the village youth the skills he had attained. He was the leader of the Nadar youth of many villages around Panagudi. They also used to go to work on the fields of of the Muslim land-lord. One day when he was gathering straw and stacking it with a few young men, he heard cries of distress from behind a stack. Rushing in the direction wherefrom the cries came, he saw a cousin of his being molested by a son of the landlord. In such cases the workers were not expected to interfere. But Jambulingam took courage and pounced upon the offender. He beat him severely and brought him to the ground.

Coming to know of it, the elders of the Nadar caste were struck with terror knowing fully well that their masters would come down heavily on all of them. Reprisals began, All the straw-stacks were set fire to by the servants of the landlord. Usually this would serve as a bitter lesson for the offenders. But Jambulingam was not cowed down, He and his friends retaliated, setting fire to the hay-stacks of the landlords in many villages. The landlord made a complaint to the police. He bribed the officers and induced them to file a criminal charge of arson on Jambulingam He was acquitted, because no one would give evidence against him. Then the police launched security proceedings against him. This is usually resorted to by the police, when they could not prove specific charges. The security proceedings would drag on for a year and the accused persons had to go and attend the court every fortnight. In the middle of the proceedings, the police arrested him on a serious charge of robbery and sent him to prison. He escaped from prison and became a bandit. A group of daring young men joined him and all of them retreated to the Western Ghats of the mountains. They descended on the highways by night and robbed merchants and rich men. They even raided the houses of police-officers. Policemen who harassed the poor people were sure to be honoured by a visit by Jambulingam, and relieved of all the valuables in their houses and also their rifles.

The people's attitude to Jambulingam was one of admiration and friendliness. They thought that he was a hero, a friend of the poor and the enemy of all those who made them suffer. They sang his praise just as the American folks sang of Jesse James.

"Jesse was a man, a friend to the poor,
He'd never see a man suffer pain".

The mighty police-force was powerless against a small band of bandits. The higher officers of the police department tightened the screw on the district officials. They decided to adopt treacherous means to capture him. They had information that once a week he used to visit his sweetheart living in a village. They approached her and with threats and a bribe they made her agree to betray him. She informed the police about the time of his visit on a certain date. The policemen lay in hiding near the woman's

house awaiting the arrival of Jambulingam. He arrived at midnight, when the villagers had all gone to sleep. The police surrounded the woman's house. Jambulingam smelled rat and came out through the door of a room in the first floor. He saw policemen arrayed round the house. He jumped down upon a straw stack and attempted to escape. The policemen were afraid to chase him. The officer commanding the police-party gave orders to shoot. A few policemen shot. Being wounded on the leg he could not run. He had a revolver with which he shot at the policemen. An officer was wounded. Being unable to run any further and not wishing to give himself up to the police, he shot himself at the temple. The policemen surrounded the corpse and emptied their rifles on it. The press reported that the police had shot him dead.

Many ballads narrating the stoty of Jambulingam pay tributes to his heroism and sympathy for the down-trodden, while ridiculing the cowardice and treachery of the police. He is a hero to the folks. The story has only a limited circulation in the southern talukas of Tirunelveli District. These summaries of the folk-hero ballads reveal the aesthetic values and attitudes of the folks to wards their heroes. These values and attitudes are quite opposed to those that were projected in the hero-images of the purana and epic type. Miraculous birth or birth in royal families is is not a necessary qualification for folk-heroship. But these heroes exhibit noble qualities of courage, heroism, daring to fight against oppression, readiness to suffer for a cause, hatred towards treachery regard for friendship and heroic exploits that have social significance.

Why do the local heroes remain local and never rise up to the status of national heroes like Jhansi Rani or Kattabomman ? Why is the circulation of the stories of Muthuppattan, Chinnanadan, Lakshmanna, Chennanna and Jambulingam restricted to a limited area, where the incidents of their biography are believed to have taken place ?

All the heroes instanced above are low-caste men who protect crops (Chinnathambi) protect the cattle (Muthuppattan), protect the rights of low-caste women (Hanuma, Kouthalamadan, Jambulingam), challenge sexual caste norms (Muthuppattan,

Chinnanadan), challenge the privileges of the higher caste-groups and demand equal rights for the lower caste men with talent and skill (Chennanna and Lakshmanna). The literary elite and the class that supports them cannot be expected to help in the circulation of the ballads and stories that reflect values and interests quite opposed to theirs. It would be the height of ignorance of history to expect them to dig their own graves by propagating values and attitudes opposite to their own, keeping in mind the fact that the ruling class consisting of the higher caste groups, the literate elite and all their allies will help to propagate literary productions reflecting only their own interests and values. They never forget that the memory of Pattan or Chennanna is a challenge to their privileges. So they never tolerate the emergence of the local hero as a national hero through all'the communication media they own or control. Sometimes the elite groups in the ruling class are interested to make use of the stories of low-caste heroes, whenever they can pose themselves as champions of the oppressed castes, but on the whole they have realised that it is dangerous to give prominence to low-caste heroes, since interests and values for which they laid down their lives are just opposite to those they cherish and wish to strengthen Black - burn remarks," Since a hero is one who protects what a group values or challenges, what it fears, heroes are reflections of definite class-interests."[46]

When a cult around a local hero develops ands preads, the elite is interested in modifying it in their interests. The modified hero image can become an image of a hero the national level hero.

It is possible to set into a pattern the biographies of the local hero ? It has been shown before, that the Bowra pattern or Raglan score very rarely applies to the local folk-heroes. From the material on biographies seen above, it is possible to construct a *pattern.*

Biographic pattern of local heroes

1. a) Boarn of low-caste strata (b) all heroes are adopted by a low-caste (c) *Muthuppattan*

2. Leaving place of birth, because of conflict with attitudes of the high caste-elite Journey to a far-off country.
3. His talents and personal achievements benefit their social group or the whole society.
4. Their exploits benefit the folk segment of society.
5. Their exploits incite jealousy and anger in high-caste which attempt to suppress the hero.
6. They reflect the values of the suppressed classes challenging those or the dominant castes.
7. *Social protest and revolt driving them to become outlaws.*
8. Their exploits win them the good will and sympathy of the folks, whose attitudes and values they reflect.
9. They are betrayed by false friends.
10. *They are killed by treachary.*
11. Most of them are deified and cults develop around their memory.
12. All the folk-heroes except a few meet with tragic deaths at the hands of the dominant caste-groups.

Transformation folk-hero into a national hero :

The local hero will be transformed into a national hero, when he projects along with folk-values, the interests of the ruling class too. Those local heroes who transcend the local limits of local action and fight for causes dear to the ruling class will win their admiration and support. In their hero image,the elite project their values prominently, belittling the folk-values of local hero image as far as they can. There are other devices by which they could transform the local hero image into national hero image. It involves a little modification. Most often it does not succeed in the cases of local heroes, because they bear the stamp of characteristics and biographic pattern of local heroship, but shoot to prominence by involving themselves in a stuggle of national importance, in which they find themselves[1] fighting side by side with their masters against a common enemy.

I shall instance the biography of Sangulli Rayanna, who began his career as a local hero and rose to national heroship, because of his struggle against British expansionism of Kittur. His biography is accepted by the elite and propagated in song and drama. There are numerous folk ballads and plays narrating his heroic exploits during his youth and after he attained the status of national hero. I shall follow the narrative of a Karma Lavani composed by Shaheera Shamlaraya in describing the life and exploits of Sangulli Rayanna.

The British had established their administration in and around the villages where Rayanna lived. He belonged to a low-caste and was employed as village messenger by the local authorities. Queen Victoria had proclaimed herself as the Empress of India and people were satisfied with the new laws brought into force by Thackery, the British resident in Baila Hongal.

Rayanna's duties as a petty government official placed hlm under the control of Balarama, a Brahmin kulkarni, who treated him as his own servant. One day the Kulkarni ordered Rayanna to wash his clothes. Not only did he refuse to do the work of the washerman, but cuffed the kulkarni on his head, pulled his tuft and insulted him. The Brahmin bore the insults patiently but was lying in wait for an opportunity to cause harm to Rayanna. He reported that Rayann'a father was in arrears of payment of revenue taxes. 'The village authorities summoned him to the chavadi and made him undergo punishment for being in default in payment of government taxes. He was compelled to bend himself at the waist and a heavy stone was placed on his back. Sangulli Rayanna grew very angry against the kulkarni for what he had done. He sold his bullocks, paid the arrears and released his father. He took a vow before all men assembled in the chavadi, that he would destroy the whole family of Balarama, the kulkarni. The same night he set fire to the kulkarni's house and left the village. The beginning of his career accords with 1 and 2 of my biographic pattern for the local hero. He had exhibited his skill in many games of manly sports even while he was living in his village. He went to Chenna Dasappa a petty ruler with his headquarters at Shivanagatti. He participated in a contest in sword fencing and wresting and won a trophy defeating the court wrestler and fencer. He was honoured

with rewards and was taken in a procession on an elephant's back along the main streets of Sivanagatti. Knowing that Chenna Dasappa was an enemy of the British, he asked the ruler to place under his command a troop of a thousand soldiers with which he promised to go to Kittur to help Rani Chennamma in her battle against the British army. Kittur Chennamma had just lost her husband and was hard pressed by the British to give up her adopted son's claim to the throne of Kittur. When she was despaired of continuing her struggle against the British forces, Rayanna brought reinforcements to the battered Kittur Fort. On the way from Sivanagatti to Kittur, Rayanna's troop burned the police-stations and offices of the British administration. All attempts to capture him failed. His troop fell upon British camps and captured the arms of the British soldiers. An officer of the British troops was murdered by Rayanna's men. Thackery and Choplin, the British officers were infuriated at the activities of Rayanna's troop. They ordered his capture dead or alive. Many engagements took place between Rayanna's troop and the British forces. He could not be defeated nor captured. People everywhere supported him and his army.

All means having failed, the British officers took resort to foul and treacherous methods to capture Rayanna. They induced Yengakana Gowda of Nagina Hala and Linganna Gowda of Kutanapur to capture Rayanna by trickery. They were offered grants of land as reward for their treachery. The Gowdas had atways pretended to be friendly with Rayanna. They invited him to a picnic as their chief guest. He arrived, and when he was taking bath in a lonely spot in the river, the servants of the Gowdas sprang upon him and captured him. He was chained on his legs and hands and sent to Nandaged.

He was publicly hanged at Nandaged. A cult has developed around his memory, but he is believed to be a hero of history rather than a cult hero.

Other ballads and the biography of Rayanna by Fleet give additional facts about Rayanna's life.

1. He belonged to a low-caste. He stayed in Kittur before he went to Sivanagatti.

2. After the defeat of Chennamma, he went to *Baila Hongal* prison and met her secretly. He fought against the British forces even after the death of Chennamma. His lieutenants, Gazaveera, Basalingappa Katti, Channa Ammatur Basappa, all belonged to the low-castes. The army of liberation under the leadership of Rayanna consisted of men belonging to different castes-Lingayats, Brahmins, Bedas, Muslims and Christians.

After Kittur fell to the British, he continued the fight for six years 1824 to 1830.

Fleet says that he was hanged. But a few ballads assign the cause of his death to suicide.

The point of departure in Rayanna's story from local hero status to national hero status has to be identified. His biography adheres to the first three motifs of the local hero pattern.

1) Born of low-caste

2) Learning the place of birth because of conflict with high-caste elite (Balarama, kulkarni)

3) Talents and personal achievements benefit their social group or the whole society.

4) Their exploits benefit a segment of society. (the people and native rulers fighting against British Expansionsim) Local hero bio-pattern 1 to 10.

The local hero decides to place his talents and skills at the service of the local ruling class to support their claims opposed by the British intruders. The British having denied the right of the widow Kittur Chennamma, to adopt a son, she decides to fight for her right. It was only intended to continue the traditional rule of her family. The interests of the Folks coincided with those of their oppressors and rulers due to historic circumstances, when the interests of all classes in the region arrayed them against the common invaders. So Rayanna's heroism benefited the ruling class. That was why Susmagathi Arasarm placed an army of a thosand men under Rayanna's command; Kittur Chennamma, a member of the ruling class accepted his help and also blessed his efforts after her defeat, while she languished in Baila Hongal prison.

Later during the days of the national liberation movement against the British rulers, the folk-heroes of the nineteenth century shot in to prominence through the mass media, controlled by the elite and the ruling class. The prominence given was to those aspects of biography, which did not contradict their class interests. Today Sangulli Rayanna's image is sought to be presented as a freedom fighter of the epic-hero type. But the ballads did not forget his local herotraits and integrated them with his image of national hero.

A number of elements of the local hero pattern is skipped over in Rayanna's biography.

Rayanna had no need to become an outlaw, because he espoused the cause of the rulers and won their support.

He won the sympathy and support of the class of his origin and also of the rulers, because at the particular moment of history, when he played his role to protect the interests and aspirations of the high and the low all were interested. He had to oppose a foreign ruling power in allegiance to the local class.

The area of circulation of Rayanna lore was much larger than the area of his cult. The reason was that the elites were not opposed to his main aspirations and values of his later life. That was the reason why the elite were not willing to accept them in the galaxy of their national heroes.

Heroes of elite origin adopted by the folks

(who became national heroes)

Heroes of ruling class here mostly from zamindars, petty kings, genarals and heroes ought bravely against mighty invaders and fell in battle defending their country. Their biographic pattern did not adhere to that of the local hero because of their different origins and class interests. Kattabomman, Kittur Chennamma, Tesingku Raja,[47] Velu Thampi[48] and others were heroes whose heroism attracted the admiration of the folks. Their heroism was celebrated in folk ballads and circulated among the folk. Heroes

of this type were adopted by the folks, though they belonged to non-folk ruling class. Summaries of the ballads of Kattabomman and Tesingku are given below to illustrate the biopattern of this type of heroes.

Kattabomman :

He descended from the chief of an immigrant community of Kambalathars, from Bellary District (now in Karnataka State). His ancestors were Polygars under Naick rulers of Madurai and later under the Nawab of Arcot. His overlord was the Zamindar of Ettayapuram, himself a Zamindar vassal of Madurai Naick.

Ballads narrate the ancestry of Kattabomman and then refer to an incident in the childhood of his life, which made him the life long enemy of the Polygar of Ettayapuram. When Kattabomman was still in his teens,his father took him and his brother 'Umaidurai' to pay homage to his overlord Ettappan. It was an age-old custom for the subordinate Polygars to prostrate before the overlord and place at his feet, the tribute they bring. The boys did not prostrate before Ettappan, when their father did. Ettappan grew furious and spoke abusive and insulting words. Kattabomman paid him back in the same coin and returned without paying the tribute they had carried with them. The Raja of Ettayapuram was seething with impotent fury. He remained the lifelong enemy of Kattabomman and was ready to adopt even the vilest means to bring harm to Kattabomman.

After the death of his father, Kattabomman chose a site (by the motif-hare defeating dog in a race) to build a fort. Thus the Panchalamkurichi fort was built. He gathered around himself a thousand armed men and appointed Vellaiyan a valiant Marava youth as the commander. He appointed a shrewd Vellala as his Minister (Thanapathi). Young men who had distinguished themselves in physical feats came to join his army. Vellaiyan, a local hero was one of them.

The Polygars of neighbouring palayams led by the Raja of Ettayapuram sent petitions to the East India Company charging Kattabomman with many crimes. They hinted broadly that British

power in Tirunelveli District would receive a set-back if his strength was allowed to grow unchecked. Jackson, the Collector of peshkush revenue of Tirunelveli District with his headquarters at Ramanathapuram was ordered to enquire into the complaints. He summoned Kattabomman to appear before him at Courtallam to answer charges against him brought by his fellow Polygars. Kattabomman went with a large retinue to meet Jackson. The Collector refused to meet him at Courtallam and went from place to place dragging the Polygar after him. Finally he granted Kattabomman an interview at Ramanathapuram. The interview was in the nature of an enquiry by a superior official against a subordinate. Since Kattabomman refused to accept the British Collector as his superior, he answered his questions with impudence. He did not recognise the Company's right to collect revenue from the people and peshkush from the Polygars nor the right of the Company's servant Jackson to entertain complaints against him and hold an enquiry. He answered Jackson's questions with sarcasm and mockery.

The Thanapathi expressed his wish to celebrate the marriage of his son and demanded money and a thousand bags of paddy for expenses. He suggested that they should loot the granaries at Srivaikuntam in which the Company had stored paddy collected as peshkush revenue from tha Polygars. With the Polygar's tacit consent, the granaries were looted by the Thanapathi and Umaidurai. In a clash that ensued, Karuppa Thevan, Commander of the guards was killed. The news reached Major Macaulay, the British Commandant at Palayamkottai. He had then no strong force under his command to be able to take punitive action against the Polygar. He reported the matter to his superiors in Trichy. They sent Captain Collins with a detachment of British soldiers and Indian sepoys to suppress the rebellious Polygar. He laid siege to Panchalamkurichi. Stupendous efforts were taken by the defenders to make Collins withdraw. Vellaiya Thevan, the Commander of Panchalamkurichi troops fought bravely and killed Collins. But he too was shot dead by Collins.

Disheartened at the death of his valiant Commander, whom he loved as a son, Kattabomman left his fort with his brothers and relatives in search of an able Commander. As Bannerman, the

new Commander of the Campany forces had issued a warning to all the Polygars of the district enjoining upon them that they should in no way help Kattabomman, none of the Polygars dared to offer help. Finally he was treacherously betrayed by Thondaiman, King of Pudukkottai to the British Commander who had him hanged upon a tree at Kayatar.

TESINGKU RAJA

The instance of Tesingku Raja,[50] who is venerated both by the folks and the elite combines in himself both the qualifications for folk-local hero and the elite hero. Hence an acquaintance with the story is illuminating and relevant.

1. The Mughul Emperior invites all his vassal-kings to try to mount a magical horse.

2. Tarani Singh, the father of Tesingku (King of Chenji, Tamil Nadu) goes to Delhi, attempts to perform the feat and fails. According to the rules of the contest he is imprisoned.

3. Tesingku succeeds to the throne when he attains majority. He goes to Delhi, successfully rides the horse and wins the release of his father.

4. Tesingku returns to Chenji, his capital and declares himself the indepenaent ruler of Chenji.

5. The Mughul Emperior sends an army against Tesingku to remove him from the throne and annex the kingdom to the empire.

6. Tesingku with Mohammad Khan, his most faithful friend ane five-hundred cavalry soldiers crosses a river in spate in the darkness of the night to fall upon the Mughul camp in a surprise attack. Only fifty men reach the other bank of the river with Tesingku and Mohammed Khan.

(Mohammed Khan was called to go to battle just when his marriage was about to be solemnised. Responding to the call of his King and friend he left without completing the rituals of his marriage straight to fight for him.)

7. The fifty men fight against the huge Mughul army of thirty-thousand, armed with muskets and cannons. Tesingku fight, valorously. He is disheartened when he learns that his best friend Mohammed Khan has been killed treacherously. Then he kills himself.

Bio-pattern of Folk-adopted Hero

A few comments are necessary on the two-biographies instanced here. *Magical horse the task it presents-failure-son* performs tasks - dies valiantly in the battle-field. These are puranic elements introduced in the story of Tesingku.

The only puranic element in the story of Kattabomman is 'the hare chases the dog.' The rest of the incidents happen on a human level.

Tesingku is more puranic, than Kattabomman before the real themes in the two stories commence. After the assumption of power by both the heroes, they dedicate themselves to the struggle freedom of their small countries. The main theme contains a local hero tradition.

Fifty courageous men fight against an army of 30,000 men (Tesingku), A mud fort is defended by 100 men against 20,000 attackers (Kattabomman). The 'hero-stone' heroes are believed to have defended cattle and homes against royal armies. There is a touching friendship between the hero and a Muslim friend (Mohammad Khan), whose valiant death on the field induces the hero to fall upon his sword and die.

Touching relations between the hero and a Marava commander (Vellaiyan) and also Kattakkaruppanan (an untouchable), both of whom die in battle, leave the hero desolate. The deaths of the twofriends dishearten the hero, leading to his decision to abandon the fort.

Here the hero transcends the limits of local hero concept, when he devotes himself to the struggle for the freedom of his

country, consisting of people of many castes and belonging to different religions. The aims of the national heroes are broader than the local heroes.

Thus the hero of eilte birth, with the content of the local hero concept and the concept of dedication to struggle against a mighty enemy for the noble cause of freedom for his country, is accepted as national hero by the folks.

Now it is possible to construct a bio-pattern for folk adopted national hero.

1) Ruler of a small kingdom
2) Defies a mighty power that tries to strangle him
3) Rallies local heroes to fight for freedom (men of low-castes)
4) Concern and friendship for local heroes who all die for him (Touching friendship and loyalty)
5) Displays heroism in battle against odds
6) Righteousness of the cause and common interests bring the masses under his leadership —The struggle for freedom (to protect lives, property, women)
7) Defying a mighty power, he is foredoomed to death
8) Glorious death in battle

Folk hero elements (3, 4, 5, 6) are synthesised with national hero traits (2, 5, 6, 7, 8).

Elite adopted folk-heroes

Elite modification of a local hero of low-caste can be clearly identified in the story of Madurai Veeran.[51] A comparison of the biographies of Muthupattan and Madurai Veeran[54] will reveal the development of the puranic hero (same as elite hero) from local hero. Madurai Veeran's story has a very wide area of circulation in Tamil Nadu.

Like Muthuppattan, he is a Chakkli (Madiga) who elopes with Bommi, the daughter of a local King Bommanna, who sends an army to kill Madurai Veeran and retrieve his daughter. Veeran defeats them single-handed. He seeks refuge with the Naick (King) of Trichinopoly who employs him as a commander of a regiment organised to suppress the Kallars, who depredated the Kingdom by their outlawry on the highways. He is successful in his exploits against the Kallars. His fame is brought to the notice of Thirumalai Nayak, the King of Madurai, who requests the King of Trichy to send Veeran to *suppress the* Kallars[52] of Alagarmalai, a Marava kingdom in his own country. He goes to battle against Kallars, wins victory and covers himself with glory.

Having won recognition of the powerful Kings of Trichy and Madurai, Veeran imagines he belongs to their class and takes liberties with the women of the royal household. He is caught while carrying off Vellaiammal, the King's sweet heart and is summarily quartered. Learning that it was Veeran, who had been quartered by his order, the King repents and prays to Meenakshi to restore Veeran's limbs.

Veeran declares that he is destined to die because of his sins in the previous birth. He desires the King to propitiate his soul and build a temple for his worship after his death. He is deified and his cult is supported by the King himself. His wife and the woman he attempted to carry away commit suicide and join him in the ghost world.

The central theme of the story is closely similar to that of Muthupattan srory.

Muthuppattan renounces his Brahminhood and joins the Chakkli caste marring Chakkli girls and crossing the sex-caste barriers. Veeran is brought up by a Chakkli and he moves in the opposite direction, marrying a high caste woman, whom he abducts. He transgresses sex-caste barriers like Muthuppattan.

Pattan defends against robbers and gets killed. Veeran suppresses the bandit bands of Kallars, but is not killed.

Muthuppattan remains a local hero. Pattan throws in his lot with the Chakkli folks, fighting to protect their interests and dying in doing so. Veeran sells himself to Kings and serves them to rid the kingdom of the pest of outlawry. His heroism and courage serve the interests of his King.

Here is the point of departure of the movements of lives fo the two heroes.

Veeran's material-being is transferred from cheri environment to the courtly enviroment in Trichy and Madurai Kingdoms. Consequently the characters in Veeran story are Kings, Ministers, Princesses and Courtesans, while in Muthuppattan story all the main characters are untouchables, (the hero of course becomes one) —the girls he marries, his father-in-law and even his enemies are of low-caste.

Muthuppattan adheres to the local hero pattern closely, Veeran on the other hand is endowed with traits of puranic heroes, success with women, magical powers, and metamorphic power. (He changes into a fly to enter bedchambers. He has power to hypnotise watchmen and guards.)

Muthuppattan remains a local hero renouncing his caste superiority and adopting a lowly caste status for his love for the Chakkli girls and has sympathy for the sufferings of their kinsmen. His revolutionary action consists in giving up his higher caste status, accepting a lower status for his love and remaining steadfast to the untouchable girls and his broad humanistic sympathy for the untouchables.

His life moves downwards in the caste hierarchic ladder. He sacrifices personal advantages of high-caste birth for his love. This touches the chords of the finest sensibilities in the hearts of the rural folks, when they hear the ballad of Muthuppattan. They feel he belongs to them.

On the contrary, the movement of Veeran's life is upwards from the cheri to the palace. Though he crosses the caste-sex barriers just like Muthuppattan, in eloping with a princess, the

consequences of the event, differ entirely from those in the case of Muthuppattan.

Pattan's love brings him from the heights of the courtly atmosphere and Brahminic eminence down to the folklife of the Chakkli mountain tribe. Giving up his place with the King, he wins freedom to serve the untouchable working folks. In terms of social and caste hierarchy, the movement of his career is downward. He wins the veneration of the folks and also heroship.

The movement of Veeran's career in social and caste hierarchy is upward. His union with a princess, thought it attracts the enmity of a King, is welcomed by two other Kings whom he serves with his talents, courage and skill. He serves the ruling class and is adopted as a member by it. But his downfall came when he attempted to act like one of them, trying to entice the King's concubine Vellaiammal. He could never shed his untouchable caste abomination. When he tries to assume the privileges of the ruling class, forgetting that they are forbidden to him, he is put to death.

When his cult spreads outside the region of its origin, Madurai Veeran, the low-caste hero has to be elevated to the courtly hero status with certain accretions. Certain modifications are introduced to transform the local hero into a national hero, whereas the Muthuppattan ballads begin directly with action, Veeran ballads begin with a detailed section on the tapas of his parents for his birth, and longlife. Many epic formulae are introduced into the Veeran ballad in the description of his marriage and his battles with the Kallars.

The attitude of the ballads to the Chakklis and the hige-caste kings and Brahmins is quite opposite to each other. The Chakkli is an abomination to the courtly elite in Veeran ballads. Even his wife wails 'Am I fated to be 'spoiled' by a Chakkli ? The Chakklis themselves are reconciled to their inferior outcaste position, when they gather to attend the marriage of Veeran.

But Muthuppattan, the Brahmin addresses the father of the girls he wants to marry as his maternal uncle (*mama*). He readily renounces the insignia of the Brahmin caste the thread, the tuft, the

mode of wearing the 'dhoti' and his box of linga. He dines with them, drinks toddy and performs their labour-making shoes. He organises the Chakkli youth to defend themselves from bandits (Kallars) who are supported by the local Zamindars (the ruling class). "Thus the Chakklis become fully human with courage and self-respect, while in Veeran they remain in dark shadows behind the uproarious label" Chakkli (Blackburn).

The attitude of the authors of the ballads of Veeran to kings is sympathetic and Kallars and Chakklis is antipathetic. In Muthuppattan, the King is lustful and deceitful (Zamindar of Singampatti) and Pattan's brothers are 'greedy for money-brother's. They attempt to kill him, when they learn from him of his resolve to marry the Chakkli girls. The folk-poet denounces them as Brahmins who have no fraternal feelings, who are greedy for money, 'pappans'. His sympathy lies with Muthuppattan and his Chakkli tribe. The partisanship of the folk-poet in Pattan ballads is quite evident.

In Veeran story, the heroes and other characters accept fate as the driving force of their lives. Bommi succumbs to fate, when she marries Veeran, the Chakkli. Veeran assigns to fate the punishment inflicted on him by the King for attempting to make off with Vellaiammal. He refuses to accept the efforts of the King to restore his limbs saying that the loss of limbs was due to him, the effect of a sin in a previous birth.

In Pattan, only the Brahmin brothers speak of fate being the cause of Pattan's crazy fascination for the low-caste girls. Pattan never speaks of fate having anything to do with his deliberate decision and action.

There remains only one more point to be discussed here. the attempt to transmute the Chakkli birth of Veeran in Madurai Veeran Ballads and Bommakka and Thimmakka in Muthuppattan ballads.

It is done by introducing the formula of miraculous birth for both Veeran and the girls.

'Veeran is said to have been born of Brahmin parents (in one version) of royal parents (in another version) who abandoned him

in the woods, because of omens that he would bring ruin to the Kingdom. Then we are to believe, he is found and raised by a Chakkli family, with whom he is associated in the story. This falsified heritage for the hero would earn three new points (royal father, virgin mother and abandonment) in the traditional biographic pattern and bring him into agreement with the principal features of Hahn's 'Aryan expulsion and return formula' (Black burn).[45]

Another insertion arriving to change the caste of the characters is found in Muthuppattan story itself. The summary of the story of Muthuppattan, I have given elsewhere, is the portrait of a local hero; In an oral version of the ballad sung till 1969 in the temple of Muthuppattan, a part of a complex of small temples around Sorimuthu Ayyan Temple near Vickramasingapuram, Ambasamudram Taluk in Tirunelveli District 'the cross caste-sex is eliminated by a substitution birth'. This relates to the birth of the Chakkli girls Bommakka and Thimmakka whom Pattan marries. This is how the birth of girls is described in the new version. A cow of a Brahmin falls into a well and dies. Learning of this, the Brahmin undertakes a pilgrimage to Benares to atone for the sin of neglect that has caused the death of a cow. His wife stays behind in their village and performs many vratas to remove the guilt of her husband. Siva answers her prayers granting her birth of two babies. Since her husband was away, she is afraid that the Brahmins will accuse her of illicit sex. When the twins were born, she abandons them in a forest. A snake protects the children. A Chakkli by name Valappakatai, who passes by, takes them and raises them. The children were given the names Bommakka and Thimmakka. Thus the women whom Pattan marries are Brahmin girls of miraculous birth.

Nothing the important variation in the story, I went to interview the singer of this version, Muthuppulavar of Kallidaikkurichi. He admitted that pressure from Brahmins and Vellala patrons of the Sorimuthu Ayyan temple compelled him to introduce the changes. He further showed me the older manuscripts of the ballad, which were records of the version his father and his grandfather used to sing, before he became the official singer of the temple. They contained the same version, I have summarised in this chapter. It has no birth substitution for the heroines.

In Veeran story, the substitution birth is exactly the same and the snake raising its hood to protect miraculously born children is not omitted. It is significant that in both stories the low-caste member of the pair of lovers (1) Veeran (2) Bommakka and Thimmakka are given a substituted birth.

It is very clear that the function of substituted birth is (1) to eliminate social protest and challenge to caste-sex rules (2) to attribute social revolt to preordained fate (3) to explain sex-caste transgressions bo birth in the same caste group, but brought up by foster parents of low-castes, brought together by fate.

It is possible to identify puranic element's in folk-ballads of local heroes and by comparison of old and new versions to separate non-folk accretions by assessing their function.

Another ballad in which caste is changed by substitution is the story of Kathavarayan. The story is a reverse plot of Muthuppattan story, of a pariah youth, who is seduced by and elopes with a Brahmin maid. His father is a 'Kavalkaran', an official watch-dog who has to seize and bring before the bar of law, offenders against law. On complaint from the Brahmins, the Chola King charges Kathavarayan's father to produce him before the royal court in two weeks. As the offender has escaped to a neighbouring kingdom, he can not be apprehended. The father goes in search of his son to the place where he resides. The King allows him extension of time limit to arrest Kathavarayan and bring him to the capital. After a year the father finds him in a town living with four wives, all belonging to higher castes. Hearing that his father would have to lose his life if he fails to produce his son before the King, he agrees to surrender himself to the King. The father brings him to the capital of the kingdom followed by his wives.

The interrogation of Kathavarayan in the royal court affords an opportunity to the poet to assail the injustice of the caste system and justify the conduct of Kathavarayan. Kathavarayan argues that he has not offended against traditions of the puranas quoting the instances of Vedic Rishis, and puranic heroes marrying women of higher or lower-castes than the one to which they belong. The Bharath heroes, marry Rakshasis and outcastes. Krishna indulges

in amorous orgies with Gopis. Siva marries, Parvathi, Chamundi, Ganga and ravish six wives of Brahmins indulging in extra marital sex. Subramanya marries a girl of the hunter caste (Kurava). He even accuses the Chola Kings of marrying six or seven wives belonging to different castes. The King is embarrassed and is shaken off his resolve to put him to death. But the guardians of caste Dharma, the Brahmins, demand his life as a penalty for offending against the code of Manu. The King has to yield to their pressure and orders him to be killed in the KALU.(Kalu-Contrivance for putting to death) The Kinghas to submit to their insistent demand.

The story adheres exactly to the local hero pattern.

The hero belongs to low-caste. He marries wives of higher castes.

1. This constitutes the 'challenge' to the elite social values and rules of caste-sex. His father himself is constrained to bring him to his doom, He submits to the demand of the ruler, because of his love for his father.

2. Retribution for the offence by the ruling class. Attempt to destroy the offender —Hero's justification of his conduct using puranic stories in support of his arguments.

3. Steadfast adherence to principle. Willingness to suffer for his deliberate conduct of social revolt.

Here the movement of the hero is upward. But his wives descend downwards agreeing to elope with him and live with him, despite the danger to his life and to theirs. The bond of love proves too strong for the threat of death to break it.

All those elements and their combination in the story produce a local hero image of the type of Muthuppattan. The thrust of social protest and revolt is quite powerful and direct.

The printed versions contain a supernatural birth legend at the end of the story-transforming the local hero image into a puranic hero image, thus blunting the sharpness of the protest

thrust. The legend of the previous birth is introduced to effect the transformation.

The hero was a resident of Kailas, the heaven of Siva. It was his daily chore to gather flowers for Sivapuja. He met four divine maids in the celestial garden of Kailas and fell in love with them. It was mutual attraction. Parvathi (the wife of Siva) came to know of this and cursed him and the maids to be born on the earth and live as husband and wives and return to Kailas. So they descended to the earth. They had miraculous births and were brought up by foster parents of different castes. The hero was brought up in an untouchable's family. Other minor puranic elements are pointed out below :

His supernatural nature is revealed, when he is made to sit on the Kalu. When he is made to sit on the contrivance for execution, the iron point will not pierce his body, because of his divine power. The king prays to him to leave his human body. Then Kathavarayan wills to leave his body to go Kailas, his permanent abode. Then the iron point pierces his body and his soul leaves for Kailas.

His name in the oral version Kathan is changed to Kathavarayan and Kathaveeryan. Kathan is a name of the untouchables It is changed into the more respectable Kathavarayan.

Such accreditations could have been introduced only by those who desire to blunt the edge of social protest contained in the folk-ballad. They are the ruling class without doubt. When our hero defies the sex-caste rules, he is ruthlessly punished. Yet his daring and courage attract the admiration of the folks. So the elite groups wish to dilute the force of protest by adding a few formulate to the story, since they cannot suppress the cult.

This is done (1) by changing the caste of the hero or (2) by making him a supernatural being. The former device is made use of in the story of Veeran in which Veeran is changed as the son of a king brought up by a Chakkli. In Kathavarayan, he is a celestial being brought down to the earth by means of a curse. The curse

is the driving force of his actions. His courageous protest against social discrimination is due to the curse. The exemplary nature of his thought and deed is sought to be restricted.[53]

Why should we assume that the myth of the previous life of the hero is an accreditation? The folks do not know the legends of Kailas or the story of Sundarar who married two divine maids, with whom he fell in love in Kailas, while gathering flowers for Sivapuja (Peria Puranam).[53] The previous birth story of Kathavarayan is similar to that of Sundaramoorthy Nayanar. Sundarar married two wives one of them Sangili Nachiar, a Devadashi, due to a curse. This story is known only to the high caste Saivites who read Periapurana or hear recitation of the poems by a story-teller. The folk-poets who praise Kathavarayan as a hero could not have invented this previous birth story. Only those who were interested in preserving status quo in caste rules ragarding marriage should have introduced this story. These rules are intended to maintain dominance of the elite of the upper castes over the folks and prevent intermingling of castes. Manu Smirities, Dharma Smirities and Dharmasastras explicitly condemn intermingling of castes and assign a low-caste status to Sankara Jatis (mixed castes). Only the higher castes are interested in the observances of the Dharmic rules of discrimination against the lower castes

Why Folk-heroes remain local heroes?

They all represent values quite contradictory to the values of Dharmasastras which preach obedience to the social and caste taboos imposed upon them by Dharmasastras and traditional usage. Any attempt of expression of discontent and protest against discriminating prescriptions is suppressed by ostracism of the offender or by legal murder.

Liberating ideas are sought to be wiped off by the masters of society, because they endanger their rights and privileges guaranteed to them by Dharmasastras and traditional usage. Hence the oral versions of stories of social protests are never written down by the literate elite who serve the interests of the ruling classes and dominant upper-caste groups. But when they are written down by literate folk-singers and begin to spread over large geographical

areas outside the region of their origin, they intervene with their interpolations and modifications to sap the protest spirit of the story. I have already described how the Muthuppattan story was modified by the advice of Brahmins and Vellalas of the region of Ambasamudram. The modified version may be allowed to circulate, but the original version of the local hero ballad will be restricted to the place of its origin.

Heroes like Hanuma, Chinnathambi, Lakshamanna defy any modification to suit the interests of the ruling class. So our literary elite are not interested in their story till a few years ago. But modern folklorists, interested in the history of social protest, are bringing to light the biographies of such local heroes, whose daring and revolt inspired folks to fight against social constraints and degradation.

Scheme of Comparison of Images — pure and modified

Pattan - I

Brahmin married
Chakkli girls

Rejection
of courtly
life Brahmin
eminence
Social revolt

Adopts
Chakkli caste
and their
way of life

↓

Reprisals
by the
ruling class →

Defends their
cattle-Unites
them and leads
them against
reprisals

↓

Dies in battle —
Martyr to his
group

Local hero

Pattan - modified II

Brahmin married
Chakkli girls
(Mod: substituted birth)

fate

Marries only
Brahmin girls
brought up
by Chakklis

Reprisals →

fate

Adopts
Chakkli
caste

Defends
cattle
Dies
in battle

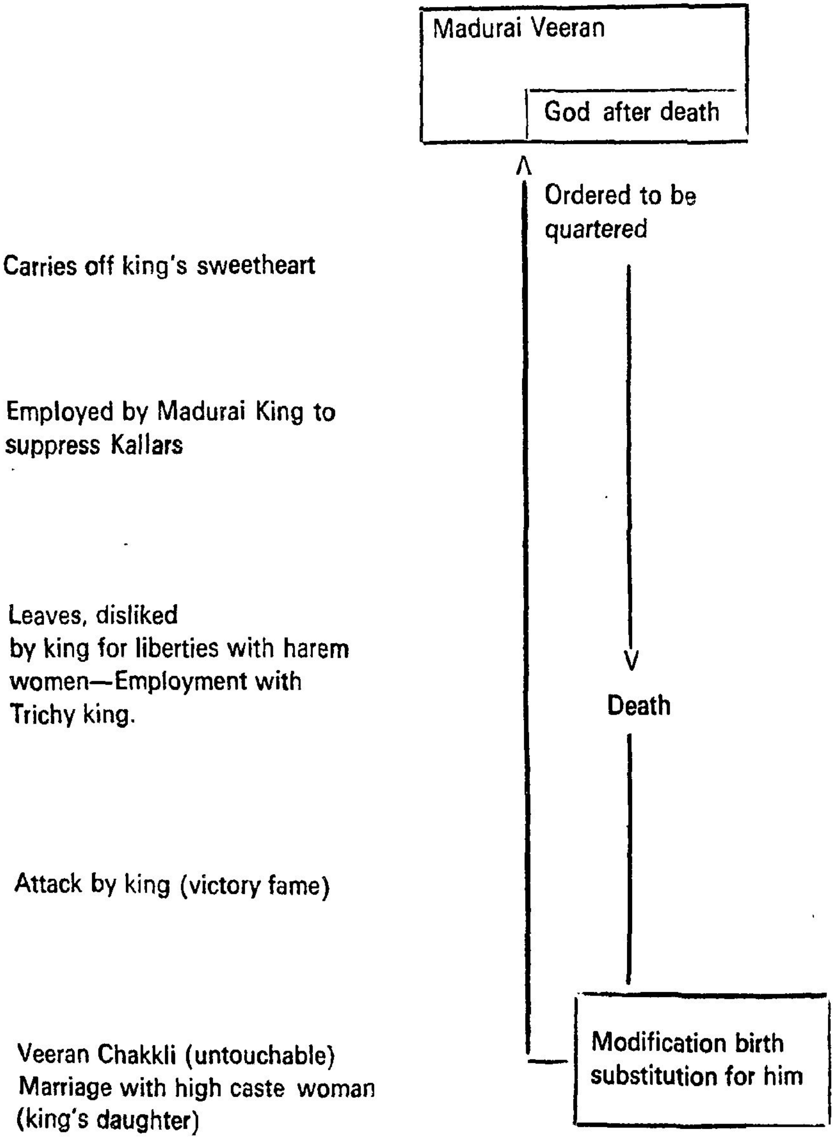
↓

Dies
marty
to his

↓

Modification did not
produce desired
results—It only served
to modify the thrust of
social revolt.

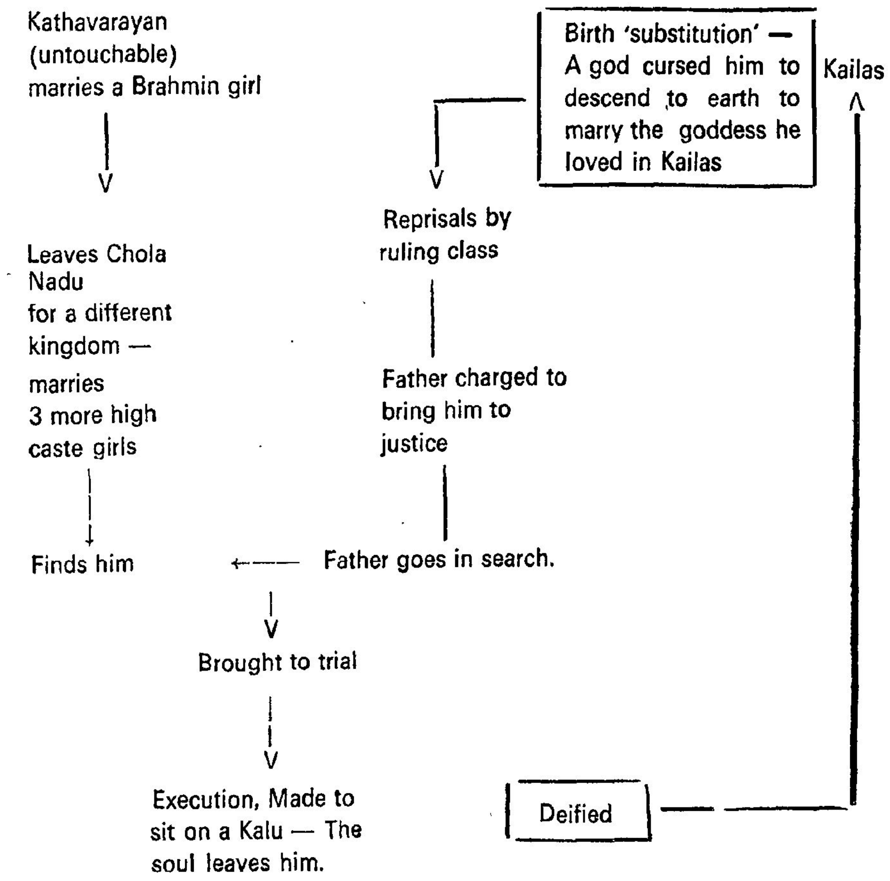
Scheme for Modification Pattan II



Pattan III

Scheme for Modification

Kathavarayan



Modification by curse and birth substitution. — After death and deification the substitution legend was invented.

Conclusion-Classification of heroes :

A classification of types of heroes is now possible, after the discussion about types of heroes in this section. First of all it has been pointed out that two fundamentally different values are projected into two basic types of heroes.

1) Elite, puranic, epic heroes are celebrated in *purana* and literary epic. They are images projecting elite values and attitudes to life. I shall assign to them the name Bowra-Raglan type.

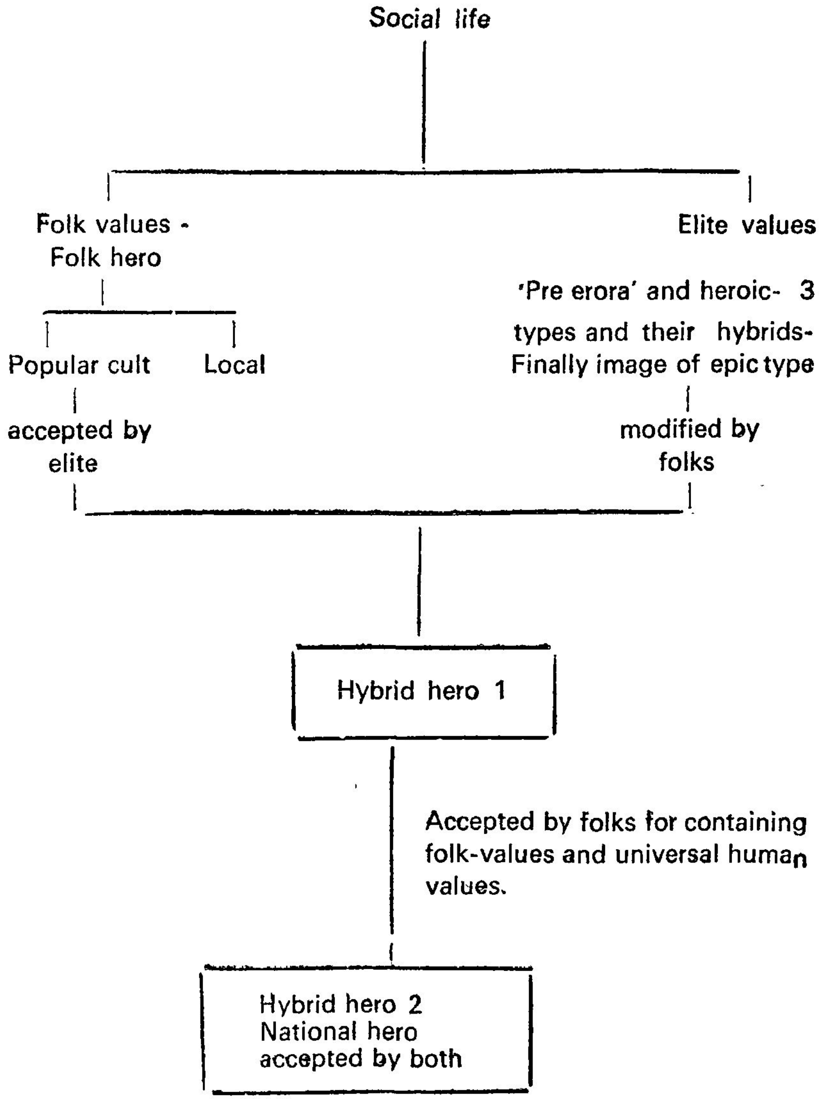
2) The other general type of hero is the folk hero. They are further classified into three sub-types.

a) The local hero (Muthuppattan), with birth status, adopting a lower-caste status, representing quite a different set of values of the type with a distinct biopattern opposing the social values and ethics of the elite is defending the interests of a folk-group.

b) Folk-hero is adopted by the elite. Rayanna type - This type in a large measure accords with the biopattern of the local hero and at a point of his life willingly defends the interests of the elite, which in part coincide with folk-interests. The movement of such heroes is upward in social status. Still the image presęrves a few elements of biopattern of the local hero and also basic folk-values.

c) The type of folk-hero partially puranicised in the direction of elite values may be named Madurai Veeran type. They still retain a little of the values of the folk to admire. (Social revolt crossing caste-sex barrier) Their movement in status is upward.

The origin and interaction of hero images is shown in the scheme below.



FOOT-NOTES

The Models of Hero

1. Bowra, Heroic Poetry

2. Veadimin Propp and Putilow-Russian Bliny

3. David and Goliath-Arjun & Karna (Mahabharat MBH)

4. Bhima, Arjuna (MBH)

5. Rama Ramayana, (Ra) Jeevaka (Jeevaka Chintamani)

6. Heroes of Hamer and the Two Indian Epics Ra. MBH.

7. All Epic Heroes-Heroes of Purananooru Tamil

8. Krishna's Breath of the Code of Warrior Conduct in favour of Arjuna

9. Aswamedha Sacrifice - A Device to Seek War

10. To Retrieve a Wife, to Liberate a Country, to Annex a Kingdom to One's Own Empire. Ibid, Ramayana, Jeevaka Chintamani (Tamil, Perunkathai (Tamil)

11. Karunakara Thondaman Fights for the Glory of His King Kulothunga I (Kannadas)

    and Subdues Kalinga Ramappayya for Tirumalai Nayak (Ramappa Ayyan Ammanai Folk-epic-ballad)

12. Iravikkutti (Ballad-Iravikkutti Pillai Por)

13 & 14. The Tragic Death of Pandavas-Result of Disastrous Mistakes

15. Stuart Blackburn-Unpublished MSS to be published in Aaraichi Vol. V. No. V 4-1976 (S. B.)

16. For more instances ref. f. n. 6 and 7

17. Raglan Scale

18. Lewis Strauns-Study of Mythology Origin Myth Fire

19. Arokkianathan-Filed Work Among Tangkul Tribe, Assam

20. D. N. Majumdar - Tribes and peoples of India - Publications Division, Govt. of India

21. K. Sathyanarayana - A History of the People and Culture of the Andhras, Chapt - living prehistory. Peoples Publishing house, Delhi 1976

22. Gordon Child - The Study of Archaeology-Chapter on Social Evolution

23. The weapons the heroes are said to carry give a clue to the chronology of the concepts

24. Veadmire Popp-Russian Bliny and the Fairy Tale, Chapter II

25. Alexe Alexander - The Russian Bliny and the Fairy Tale, Chapter II

26. Ibid, Conclusion

27. Ibid., Chapter III

28, 29. Veronica Ions - Indian Mythology Page 100. Hamly series New York Subramania (Karthikeya) Ibid., page 101

30, Hindu Heritage Series - Krishna, Chapt. Historicity of Krishna

31. J. G. Frazer - Dying God Chapt. Supplanter Heroes

32. Ref. 28, 29. Ibid. Page 68

33. Sangulli Rayanna is a Folk-hero of North Karnataka of Kittur Region

34. Kattabomman is a Folk-hero in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu

35. Kittur Chinnamma is a Folk-heroine Rani of Kittur in North Karnataka - 1825

36. Ballad ed. N. Vanamamalai-Muthuppattan Kathai. Madurai University 1972

37. Not available in print-Available in the temple at Nattathi village Tirunelveli District

38. Chinthamani Kathai-Available in print-Kalaignar Veliyeedu, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu

39. Kouthalamadan-Ballad not available in print - A palm leaf record exists in Thamaraikulam, Kanyakumari District

40. Chengam Natukarkal (Tamil) (Changam hero stone) Department of Archaeology, Madras - Ed. Dr. R. Nagaswamy, Director

41. Hanuma Oral Versions is now current in Dharwar region, North Karnatak. A few versions collected by students of the Institute of Kannada Studies unpublished - Dr. Imrapur translated two version for me

42. -do- Dr. Imrapur translated one version for me

43. -do-

44. Jambulingam (Tamil)-Oral versions told me by M. Natarajan, Chidambarapuram, Kalakad, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu

45, 46. Stuart Blackburn, Calif University (my pupil)-Unpublished article to be published in Aaraichi

47. Historical hero-Chengi, North Arcot District, Tamil Nadu

48. Historical hero who fought against the British and died in Kerala

49. Generalised version from two ballads Kattabomman Kathai-(1) Published by Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras (2) Madurai University Publication Ed. N. V.

50. Tesingku Rajan Kathai (Tamil) - Printed ballads available-Publisher not known

51. Madurai Veeran-Many editions of the text are available in print.

52. Kallar-A caste group of ebullient persons, who were notorious for their bandit activities on the highways of Madurai kingdom during the Naick rule

53. Kathavarayan Kathai - Ed. N. V., Madurai University-1972

54. I am indebted to stuart Blackburn for the concept of birth substitution for modifying the image of local hero into a hybrid image acceptable to the elite

Chapter Summary of 'Historical Ballads'

Folk-view of history and folk-attitude to historical heroes form the background to this chapter. Through an exhaustive study of the motifs of a few ballads, it has been sought to point out that historical ballads, which are essentially folk literary creations, embodying a folk-ethic for heroism can be used to corroborate history. Seven ballads have been chosen for analysis. They are, in the order of discussion.

1) Iver Rajakkal Kathai

2) Ramappayyan Ammanai

3) Iravikkutti Pillai Por

4) Khan Saheb Chandai

5) Kattabomman Kathai

6) Maruthu and

7) Velu Nachiar

These ballads belong to four successive periods of Tamil history. These periods are : 1) Vijayanagar empire 2) Naicks of Madurai 3) Moghul empire 4) The British period.

This chapter on historical ballads forms a companion to the chapter on Models of Heroes.

HISTORICAL BALLADS

HEADINGS

1) Folk-view of history : ballads of history in *Tamil Nadu,* their list and currency

2) Division of the history (as in the ballads) into four categories or periods

3) Period I : The struggle between Vijayanagar emperors and the Pandya Kings of Tirunelveli District

   a) Iyer Rajakkal Kathai; different versions

   b) Veenadi Veenan Kathai : different versions and the corroborations of historical data: interpretations of discrepancies between ballads and history in the light of folk-attitudes to history

4) Period II : The struggle between Naicks of Madurai and the Polygars of Marava country

   a) Ramappa Ayyan Ammanai : the story — the two heroes in the story as viewed by the folks

   b) Iravikkutti Pillai Por : the story — the folk — attitude as seen from the ballad

5) Period III : Khan Saheb Chandai : the story of the ballad; Thandavaroyan, another hero of the ballad considered in comparison to Khan Saheb. A comparative list of folk-attitudes to these two heroes

6) Puli Thevan as a hero : a brief consideration — a study in a regional hero.

7) Period IV : The period of British imperialism

   a) Kattabomman

   b) Maruthu : folk-attitudes to Maruthu

8) Velu Nachiar : a folk-heroine — Velu Nachiar and Maruthu compared as to social status and heroism;

9) Conclusions

HISTORICAL BALLADS IN TAMIL

The folks are disinterested in historical events, unless they directly affect their fortunes. Whoever ruled in Madurai[1] or Tanjavur[2] was no concern of theirs, till the rulers began to interfere in the affairs of their village. Hence the self-sufficient economy of the villages bred a feeling of political unconcern in the folk-mind for centuries.[4]

Therefore, history, for the folks for centuries was only local history, directly affecting the peaceful tenure of their social life. Hence the ballads of their creation, were concerned with the life and activities of local heroes, which formed the subject of study under the section 'local hero' in the last chapter. Local heroes played a role in local events changing the social consciousness of the local population and replacing old values by new. But they remained only local heroes. I discussed the question of how local heroes were transferred into regional or national heroes. The question of regional and national history is tied up with events and movements on a large geographical scale. The regional political events, affecting the folks, stirred their consciousness, reflecting itself in historical ballads.

These ballads are not records of history. They are folk-literary creations reflecting the folk attitudes to historical events and their assessment of historical personages. They are in the nature of Shakespeare's history.

The historical ballads are heroic folk-songs. that trace the career of a hero through incidents of history. The heroism and personal traits of the hero, that the folks admire, are exalted and shown as examplary.

Historical ballads are rarer than other types of ballads, because of the lack of interest of the folks in political events, until they were drawn into struggle for freedom against intruders.

Historical ballads now current among the folks known to scholars are :

1) The story of five kings — (Iver Rajakkal Kathai)
2) The battle with Kannadian – (Kannatian Pataipor)
3) The story of five Pandyas — (Pancha Pandiyar Kathai)
4) The story of Vettumperumal — (Vettumperumal Kathai)
5) Ramappayyan Ammanai
6) The battle of Iravikkutti — (Iravikkutti Pillai Por)
7) The story of Tesingku Raja (Tesingku Rajan Kathai)
8) The battle of Khan Saheb (Khan Saheb Chandai)
9) Sivagangai Ammanai
10) Sivagangai Kummi
11) Kattabomman Kathaippatal
12) Kattabomman Koothu

It is a pity, historical ballads have not yet attracted the attention of scholars. Out of 12 historical ballads available in print, seven were edited by me, of which six were published by the Madurai University and one by the new Century Book House. Summary of a few ballads are available in different caste-chronicles. A very large number of historical ballads have not yet been written down from oral versions known to ballad singers. The historical value of local traditions and folk-ballads has not been realised by historians at least in Tamil Nadu. As such, we have only a few well-edited printed ballads for study,

Ramappa Ayyan Ammanai is avilable in two different editions, one published by Saraswathi Mahal Library, Thanjavur and the other by the University of Madras, (Ed., S. Vaiyapuri Pillai). The University edition contains another ballad included as appendix, Iravikkutti Pillai Por. Sivagangai Ammanai and Sivagangai Kummi were published by the Government Oriental Manuscripts Series a few years ago. The themes of the ballads are drawn from local history or regional history.

Here follows a list of ballads edited by me.

Madurai University :

1) The story of Muthuppattan (Muthuppattan Kathai)
2) The story of Kathavarayan (Kathavarayan Kathai)
3) Kattabomman Koothu (Folk-play)
4) Khan Saheb Chandai
5) The story of five kings (Iver Rajakkal Kathai)
6) Kattabomman Kathaippatal (ballad)

New Century Book House :

7) Kattabomman Kathaippatal (ballad — a different version from 6)

A few ballads other than those listed above may be available in printed forms as cheap books without proper editing, abounding in errors or as palm-leaf manuscripts, damaged by the ravage of termites and rats. Scholars know only the names of a few other ballads for which manuscripts are not available ; but the history is in oral circulation in areas, where the historical events are believed to have occurred. Hence the most urgent requirement for research in this area of the field is collection of all available manuscripts of historical ballads, transcribe and edit them and bring them out in print.

A few old ballads still survive, because the heroes of the ballads have been deified and cults have developed around their

'biography' and temples have been dedicated to them. During annual festivals to these deified heroes, their ballads are sung to worshippers for seven or eleven days. The songs are memorized from palm-leaf manuscripts, kept safely locked in wooden boxes. Iver Rajakkal Kathai is sung during festivals in a temple dedicated to the heroes in a village near Nagercoil, Kanyakumari District. The story of Chinnanadan Kumaraswamy is sung in a temple at Nattathy, Tirunelveli District.

It is very probable that a rich harvest can be obtained if a search for ballad is systematically made in Ramnad, Madurai, Coimbatore and Salem districts, where local traditions about historical events still survive.

A few historical ballads from North Karnataka were collected by 'Fleet and by the efforts' of Imrapur and Maheshwadi, both of the Institute of Kannada Studies, Karnataka University. They relate to the biographies of Kittur Chennamma, Babu Saheb, Belavadi Mallamma, Sangulli Rayanna and other historical personages, who played their roles in the Carnatic Wars against the British. These ballads are all in Kannada language and therefore not available for study by non-Kannada scholars just as Tamil ballads for non-Tamil scholars.

A small number of Malayalam ballads are available in Malayalam language, a few of which have been translated into English by Percy Moqueen who collected folk-materials from Malayalam, Tamil and Kannada, a century ago. Ballads about the resistance of Muslims to Portuguese piracy known as Kunjali Maraicar ballads survive as oral as oral versions in Malayalam. Folk-songs and a play on the biography of Velu Thampi Dalavoy, who fought against the British aggression and took his own life, when he was about to be captured by the British troops are available in Malayalam. Materials available to the English knowing scholor is quite scanty. It is hoped that materials of heroic lore in folk repertoire in all Indian languages will be translated into English, so that Indian folk-heroic tradition that forms an important element of Indian Culture is made available to all.

From the available sources, I shall date Tamil historic ballads according to chronology of the events described in them.

I. The struggle between Vijayanagar emperors and the Pandya Kings of Tirunelveli District (Fourteenth to Sixteenth Century)

II. The struggle between Nayaks of Madurai and the Polygars of Marava country (Seventeenth Century)

III. The opposition against Moghul expansionism (Seventeenth Century)

IV. The resistance to British expansionism (Eighteenth Century)

PERIOD I

The earliest ballads refer to battles between 'Kannadian' invaders and 'Pancha Pandyars' of Tirunelveli District. Pancha Pandyars literally means the five Pandya Kings. 'Pancha' also may mean, descended from the five 'Pandavas' of the Mahabharata fame. The Pandyas claimed descent from Pandu, the father of the Pandavas. In any case, the Pandyas were ruling families in small local kingdoms of the south in Tenkasi, Kayathar and Vallioor according to the ballads after the conquest of Madurai by Mallik-Kafur in 1318.

There are many versions of the story of the five Pandyas —

1) Pancha Pandyar Kathai

2) Iver Rajakkal Kathai

3) Kannadian Pataippor and

4) Vettumperumal Kathai.

Summaries of three versions are appended below. 'Iyer Rajakkal Kathai' is available in print published by the Madurai University (Ed. Vanamamalai). The other versions have not been recorded, but the stories are recorded in caste-chronicles.[4a]

Version I Iver Rajakkal Kathai[5]

The birth of Kulasekara Pandya and his four brothers to the Pandya King ruling at Madurai is described.

Kulasekara Pandya goes with an army on a mission of conquest and annexes many kingdoms to the Pandya rule,

He arrives in Kottaru (Nagercoil), where he is fascinated by the beauty and the artistic abilities of a danseuse. He marries here.

He builds a fortress at Vallioor and stations a strong force there.

An artist visits the King and paints his portrait, a copy of which he carries to Vijayanagar. He shows it to the princess of Vijayanagar. She is struck by reports about the King and desires to marry him. She tells her father of her wish, He sends an emissary to Kulasekara to negotiate the match. Kulasekara is proud of his legendary and ancient lineage, while he thinks low of the recent origin of the Vijayanagar dynasty. He rejects the proposal for marriage.

The Vijayanagar emperor, feeling insulted, sends an army to reduce the fortress of Vallioor and bring Kulasekara as prisoner to Vijayanagar.

After a valiant battle, Kulasekara is captured and his brothers are killed in battle. He is carried in a palanquin to the Kannadian Capital. Seeing no way of escape, Kulasekars takes his life while riding in the palanquin. The bearers of the Palanquin carry the dead body of Kulasekara to their King's capital. Drawing apart the curtains closing the palanquin, the bearers discover that Kulasekara is dead. They report it to the Emperor.

The sad news is passed on to the Princess. She decides to marry the corpse and be burned on the funeral pyre along with it.

The queen wedding is celebrated and then the funeral rites are conducted. The princess follows the palanquin, on which the corpse is carried, riding on a red horse dressed in red clothes. She commits suicide and attains divine status of the chaste woman.[5]

The locale of the story is Vallioor and then Vijayanagar.

Version II Pancha Pandyar Kathai

This version is the story of a battle between a Kannadian King and Kulasekara Pandyan, a local King of Kayatar. The Kannadian King invaded the southern Tamil Nadu and laid siege to a fortress at Kayatar. After a long drawn siege, the Kannada King sends an emissary to Kulasekara offering a duel with each of the five Pandya Brothers to decide the issue of victory in battle to avoid wholesale slaughter of the population and ravage of the Pandyan country. The two kings entered into a solemn agreement that the party defeated in the duel should leave the country In the duel that followed, all the brothers except Kulasekara were killed. The Kannada king did not wish to kill him and annihilate an ancient dynasty. He offered to marry his daughter to — Kulasekara and crown him King of all the territories he had annexed in the region of Kayatar. The Pandyan prince rejected the offer saying that he would never agree to marital relations with the Princess, because her father had killed all his brothers and laid waste his Kingdom. The Kannada King captured him and sent him in a palanquin to his capital. On the way - Kulasekara took his life. The princess who knew that her father had wished to marry her to Kulasekara decided to consider herself as his widow and throw herself in the funeral pyre of the dead prince.[6]

The locale of the story is Kayatar and then Ottapidaram in Tirunelveli District.

Version III Kannadian Pataippor

Another story with a similar theme is narrated in a ballad, 'Kannadian Pataippor'. Kulasekara Pandyan was ruling over a small kingdom with his capital Vallioor. The Kannadian King desired to marry his daughter to Kulasekara. An emissary came with the proposal of marriage to the Pandya Court. The Pandya King rejected the proposal boasting of his ancient lineage and ridiculing the recent origin of the Emperor's dynasty. Being insulted, the Kannada King sent an army to demolish the fort at Vallioor, capture Kulasekara alive and take him to his capital. The Kannada army was repulsed by the valour of two commanders of the Pandyan Army, Mannan and Mathiappan, brothers belonging to the fishermen caste (Parava).

The Kannada King sent a spy to murder the commanders of Kulasekara. He sneaked into the camp of the Pandya King in disguise and slept near Mannan, the elder brother. When everything was quite, he cut off Mannan's head, hid it in a pot and carried it off. He was spotted out by Mathiappan, the younger brother. He seized him and demanded that he should show what was in the pot. Seeing the severed head of his brother in the pot, he killed the spy.

Learning about the fate of his spy, the Kannada King sent reinforcements to defeat the Pandya King. The fortress was demolished and Kulasekara captured. The rest of the story follows the pattern of the first two versions.

Version IV Vettumperumal Kathai

'Vettumperumal Kathai' is mentioned in the 'History of the Maravas'[8]. The version appears to be a rehash of Version II. No prose version or ballad is available.

All the versions and other local traditions at Vallioor, Tenkasi, Kayatar point to a battle between the Pandya Kings and the Kannada Kings.[8]

The hero of the story is invariably Kulasekara Pandya.

He has five brothers.

The cause for the war is the rejection of the proposal of marriage.

The reason for rejection of the proposal is dynastic status of the two royal families.

The defeat and capture of the Pandya is common to all the ballads and other local traditions.

The suttee incident forms the conclusion of all versions.

'The digressive episodes' differ in the various versions.

Version I Veenathi Veenan Kathai :

It narrates the story of a high caste Vellala who, being cheated of all his property by his relatives, who comes to Vallioor to start a new life. He discovers the corruption and anarchy prevailing there and decides to teach the King a lesson, Failing to prosper by fair means, he turns a bandit and illegal tax-collector. He amasses immense wealth, builds a palace for himself, employs thousands of soldiers and runs a parallel - Government. The King arrives from Madurai hearing reports of corruption and confusion in his province of Vallioor. The King's men sent to arrest him are bribed by the bandit and do not return to the King. The King's brothers are sent to seize him. The bandit shows them his treasures, follows them to the King's court and confesses his crimes. He exposes corruption of the Officers of the Court and surrenders all his treasures. The King pardons him and appoints him minister.

The digressive episode has no organic connection and structural bonds with the main theme of war-capture-suicide and suttee in which the main characters are the Pandya King, the Kannada King and the Kannada Princess.

Version II

There is another episode in version II, Idaichi Kathai. A woman belonging to the Idaiyar caste (cowherds) is unintentionally instrumental in revealing to the Kannada soldiers the source of water supply to the Vallioor reservoir. The Kannadian army close up the spring in the mountain and stop the flow of water to the Vallioor reservoir. Again the connection of this episode to the main story is structurally very loose.

The Mannan-Mathippan episode is also of the same character.

The ballads add on accretions in places where they are recited, depending upon the caste of the people who constitute the audience. The folk poet and the performer add new episodes when the story spreads to communities belonging to different castes.

1. A Vellala exposes corruption in Vallioor fortress[10].

2. A maid of the cowherd caste unintentionally reveals the source of water. (She was no conscious traitor)[11].

3. Two subordinate heroes were selected from the fishermen caste. The loyalty of the heroes to the King is emphasised in the episode.

Many more episodic digressions may be found in oral versions that can be recorded in different localities, where people belonging to different castes live. The main theme will absorb accretions, as it circulates among various communities belonging to different castes[12].

It will be an interesting study if only a large number of versions from different localities is available.

But at the moment of the stage of collection of the various versions of the ballad, this effort will be futile.

So, we have to concentrate on the main theme, as generalised before.

Historical background :

The ballads refer to battles between the Kannada invaders and the local Pandya Kings of Kayatar and Vallioor, over a long period of time. Four problems arise out of the references of the ballads to battles between the Kannada invaders and the Pandyan defenders.

1. To what historical times do the ballads and tradition refer ?

2. Who are the so-called Kannada Kings figuring as invaders ?

3. Who were the Pandyans referred to as defenders ?

4. Is it possible to sift facts from fiction ?

If answers could be found for these four questions, we may attempt to solve the important problems of.

a. the attitude of the folk-poets to historical events that constitute the skeleton of the ballads

b. How far historical facts are retained in the ballads ?

For answering the first four questions, I shall make use of authentic books describing political relations between the Hoysala and Vijayanagar Kings, with the later Pandyas, who left Madura, after its capture by Malik Kafur and Malik Nemi and migrated to Tenkasi in Tirunelveli District. A few families related to the Pandyas carved out small local kingdoms in different places in the same district. A few local chieftains also threw off their vassalage to the - Pandyas, after they had left Madurai and assumed the title of Pandyas. Except the dynasty that ruled at Tenkasi, all the other local kings, who called themselves Pandyas, were independent local rulers, who believed that they descended from the Pandya dynasty of yore. For facts of history I shall rely upon such authorities as Dr. S. Krishnaswamy, R. Sathianathan and also upon the Gazeteers of Tirunelveli and Madurai and Caldwell's History of Tirunelveli District.

All authorities agree that the Hoysala ruler Ballala III, met Giatuddin of Madurai in 1342 in battle and the Sultan lost his life. The battle took place at Kannanur Koppam. The aim of the invasion was to destroy the Sultanate of Madurai. He was the first Kannada invader after the establishment of the Sultanate of Madurai who came south as far as Madurai. The Muslim historians Shamsi and Siraj Afif - mention the defeat and death of Qurbat Hasan Kangu, the Sultan of Madurai in a battle between him and a Chief, Bakan. Dr. Krishnaswamy examines the identification of Bakan with Kannara Kampanna by Dr. Venkatramanayya and Thiru Venkatachari and refutes their views and concludes that Bakan was no other than Bakka I, the younger brother of Harihara the co-founder of Vijayanagar dynasty.

The third Kannada invader who went to attack Madurai was Bakka's son Kampanna. He defeated Sultan Muberak in 1371.

His victory over the Sultan is - celebrated in a poem, 'Madura Vijayam' by his wife Sri Gangadevi [13] The Sultanate was in existence from 1335 to 1378 a little over forty three years.

The Pandyas were not ruling in Madurai during that period. But they held part of Ramnad District and South Tirunelveli District. Inscriptional evidence points to komara Varman Vira-pandya Deva ruling in 31st year when Kempana Udayar came from the north and appointed several Nayakas and restored peace and order'. He ruled between 1340 and 1380. His inscriptions of this period do not refer to suzerainty of Vijayanagar over him.

A succession of rulers of a branch of the Pandyan family ruled at Tenkasi. Inscriptions found at Kottar, Karivalamvanda-nallur, Courtallam and Tiruppattur have made scholars conclude that five rulers were ruled at Tenkasi between 1371 and 1422. They bore the titles of the Pandyas of the middle ages, Komaran and Jatila Varman. None of their inscriptions found in Tirunelveli District points to their having been subject to the overlordship of Vijayanagar.

Having been ousted from their capital by the Mughal generals, the Pandyas should have migrated south and settled at Tenkasi. The main branch of the Pandyan royal family settled at Tenkasi and a few other branches settled at different places in Tirunelveli District. There are no inscriptions of Pandyas to be found in and around Madurai in the second half of the 14th century, which coincide roughly with the sultanate rule in Madurai. Gangadevi says in Madura Vijayam that the Pandyas, Cholas, Cheras and Vira Ballala had been vanquished by the Sultan. She of course means, the rulers who held sway over the traditional division of Tamil Nadu as Chola, Chera, Pandya Nadu and Vira Ballala by name.

No conflict is mentioned between the Kannada rulers of Vijayanagar and the Pandyas of Tenkasi between AD 1371 and 1422. Between 1422 and 1463, Arikesari Parakrama Varma Pandya ruled over the southern Pandya region with Tenkasi as his capital. He had issued numerous inscriptions and his fame rested on the builder of the Visvanatha Temple at Tenkasi. He was a contempo-

rary of Devaraya II of Vijayanagar. The form and style of his inscription follow the records of the ancient Pandyas of Madurai. There are no Vijayanagar inscriptions in south Tirunelveli area inscribed before 1499 A. D. Hence Parakrama was not a feudatory of Vijayanagar.

Narasu Naick and Pandyas of Tenkasi

Saluva Narasimha ascended the Vijayanagar throne after a coup, helped by his general Narasimha Nayaka in about 1485. The Pandyas of the south were independent and hostile to Vijayanagar. Saluva Narasimha in order to annex all the small Kingdoms in the south wished to present a powerful opposition against the southward drive of the Muslim Kingdoms of Bhamini, Bijapur and Golkonda. An inscription of Narasa Nayaka says, 'Conquering Chera, Chola, Pandya and the fierce Turushka (Muslim). The Chola dynasty had become extinct in the beginning of the thirteenth century. So the Chola referred to in Saluva Narasimha's inscriptions refers to the Vijayanagar Governor (Mahamandeleswara) of Chola Province, at that time, Konerriraja, who had asserted his independence of Vijayanagar. It was one of the aims of Narasa Nayaka's expedition to remove him from his post. After achieving his aim, Narasa Nayaka turned his attention to Pandyamandalam. Inscriptions mention the defeat of a Pandya King by Narasa Nayaka's It was Jatavarman Kulasekara Parakrama Pandya, who ascended the throne in 1480. He was forced to pay tribute from 1481. He continued to rule till 1507. Existing local traditions identify Pancha Pandyas with Pandyas of Tenkasi. Then may we conclude that the Pandya King, the hero of the ballads is Jatavarman Kulasekara Parakrama Pandya and the Kannadian invader, Narasa Nayaka ? If we make such a hypothesis, a few difficulties crop up.

Jatavarman Kulasekara Parakrama Pandya was not killed in battle, but was only defeated and became a feudalist of Vijayanagar. He lived for 26 years after his defeat (1481-1507).

But all the ballads end with the suicide of the Pandya Prince while being carried off after his defeat. So he must have died a few days after his defeat and capture.

The evidence for the proposal for marriage between a Pandya King and a Kannada Princess and its rejection by the former leading to a battle, is negative.

The sites of the battle mentioned in the ballads are Kayatar and Vallioor. They are at least 40 miles away from Tenkasi where the feudatory Pandya ruled.

Hence identification of the hero of the ballads with Jatavarman Kulasekara Parakrama Pandya cannot be accepted.

THE BATTLE OF TAMPRAPARANI

About fifty years after the Subjugation of Pandya by Vijayanagar, a challenge to the power of the Empire arose from the south. Three feudalists of Vijayanagar, Saluva Nayaka Chellappa, Tumbichi Nayaka and Authalavira Udayamarthandan seized the fertile regions of Kalakkad and Ambasamudram under the rule of Tenkasi Pandya. They threatened Tenkasi and the Pandya King, Jatila Sri Vallaba Tribuvana. Sri Vallaba, appealed for protection as a feudalist against the aggressiveness of co-feudalists. Achyutha Raya sent an army to bring the rebels under control, and a battle took place on the banks of the river Tampraparani. The rebels were defeated and made to flee. The Pandya was reinstated at Tenkasi and the territories seized by the confederation of Nayakas and the Raja of Trivandrum were restored to him. On this occasion, Achutha Raya married a Pandyan Princess. This expedition was intended to help the Pandya against his enemies and ended in the restoration of his throne to him and the establishment of friendly relations between the Pandyas and the Vijayanagar Emperors. The battle of Tampraparani took place in the year 1532.

VITHAL RAYA'S CAMPAIGN AND VETTUMPERUMAL

Taking advantage of the struggle for ascension at Vijayanagar and the confusion that had resulted, the ruler of Trivandrum rose against the overlordship of Vijayanagar. An expedition was sent against him under Vithala Raya in June 1554 by Sadasiva Raya, the Vijayanagar Emperor. The Trivandrum ruler interfered

with the affairs of the Pandya rulers at Tenkasi and Kayatar. At, this time there appears to be a fission of the Tenkasi Kingdom into three or four small kingdoms, Tenkasi, Vallioor, Kayatar.

The local Kingdom of Kayatar was ruled by Vettumperumal Raja. The Tenkasi Pandya and Kayatar Pandya were frequently at war. Kayatar Pandya joined hands with the Raja of Travancore and harassed the Tenkasi Pandya, who appealed to Vithala Raya for help. He was defeated and ousted from Kayatar. He sought the help of Unnikerala Varma of Travancore. He again marched on his capital and recaptured it. The Vijayanagar Governor Chinna Thirumala marched against him demanding his submission to the Emperor. But Vettumperumal showed no signs of submission. He was defeated in battle and taken prisoner, An inscription at Ilavelangal refers to the death of Marava at the hands of Vengala Raja.[14] . Vengala Raja was no other than Vithala Raya and the Marava Vettumperumal of the Kayatar [5]

All the ballads mention duels as means of settling disputes. But there is no mention of duels in inscription or other historical records except the Ilavelangal record. The first mention of a duel to settle disputes of claim to the throne was between Kempanna and the Sultan of Madurai, in Madura Vijayam' a war poem composed by Sri Gangadevi, the wife of Kempanna. The end of the Sultanate came in 1371. Madura Vijayam must have been composed a few years later. The duel episode is brought into the ballads after the date of Madurai Vijayam.

The ballad accounts of Vettumperumal contain the following facts of his career.

He was ruling at Kayatar.

He fought with Tenkasi Pandya with the help of the Raja of Travancore.

Vithala Raya came to the help of Tenkasi Pandya in order to support the feudalist of Vijayanagar against the rebels.

The terms of peace offered by Vithala Raya were rejected by Vettumperumal.

He fought against Vithala Raya and was defeated. He took refuge with Unnikerala Varma and returned with an army to recapture his capital.

He succeeded in recapturing his capital.

Ilavelangal inscription (1547) mentions his death, but his adversary as Vengala Raya.

Folk-poets cannot be expected to have knowledge of inscriptions and Madura Vijayam. But they must have been conversant with local traditions about historical events.

The Vijayanagar rulers were Kannadiyar. There are local traditions about Kannada Rajas ruling over parts of south-west Tirunelveli District, where they dug channels and built dams known as Kannadian Channels and Kannadian Dam. Place names are also associated with Kannada rulers of chieftains — Dhalapathisamudram, Javantimantapam, Basavpuram, Ravanasamudram, Vripakshi. The Vijayanagar rulers had established direct rule in a few local kingdoms administered by their military officers. The branches of old Pandyan family were made feudatories and protected by the imperial army. The challenge by rebels was met with force in alliance with the feudalists. All this must have been known to the folk-poets through local traditions. Local traditions are handed down from generation to generation, preserving the main theme, but getting changed in minor elements of the theme and adding on new episodes.

Thus in the group of ballads on the war between the Pandyas and the Kannada Kings, historical facts are transmitted into folk-literary facts through the prism of folk-aesthetic perception and value-system.

The alliance between the Tenkasi Pandyas and the Kannada Kings is not relevant to the theme. Hence the friendly support of the Vijayanagar King to the Tenkasi Pandya is omitted in the ballad

The conflict between Vettumperumal and the Kannada King is chosen for treatment in the ballad.

The historical facts, constituting the cause for the conflict, are changed into artistic truth, of proposal for marriage and its rejection following ancient literary tradition of war caused by rejection of proposal of marriage by a King to a local King, asking his daughter in marriage to himself or his son. This genre of poems is called Mahat Kotai Marutthal (மகட் கொடை மறுத்தல்) rejecting the offer of daughter). Poems bearing this content are found in Purananooru and Kalambakam.

The ballad mainly makes use of the conflicts between local Tamil kings, who fought against expansion of the Vijayanagar empire. Kulasekara is an artistic representative character of a class of local kings who fought against Narasa Nayaka and Vithala Raya and other Vijayanagar generals to save their own kingship and independence. He is only a generalised character and not modelled upon any particular historical personage.

The two different sites of battle, Kayatar and Vallioor bear relics of old capitals, inscriptions and ruins pointing to old forts and existence of dynasties a few hundred years ago. Persistent local traditions exist in both sites, about a battle in which forts were destroyed and kings taken prisoners.

In the case of Kayatar, the Ilavelangal panel and inscription clearly prove the fact of a battle between a Marava king and Vengala Raya, identified as Vettumperumal and Vittala Raya. The figures suggest that one is a Tamil king and the other, a Kannada king.

The relics found in Vallioor and the local tradition indicate the existence of a fort. Inscriptions of Sundara Pandya is found on the walls of Sundareswar-Meenakshi temples, the oldest in Vallioor. The town was in existence in the middle of the fourteenth century. The ballads mention the building of a fort and its destruction after 80 years. Local tradition confirms it. Its destruction *is attributed to its seizure by the Kannada army. History confirms that* Vittala Raya pursued Vettumperumal to Kottaru. Vallioor is on the way from Kayatar to Kottaru. So it is probable that a Pandya Prince ruling from Vallioor gave protection to Vettumperumal who belonged to his own ancestral family. Vittala Raya must have razed the fort and captured the prince.

Folk-memory of these events coloured by literary and folk-tradition of rejection of 'marriage alliance leading to war', inspired folk-ballads about Kannada Pandya conflict.

The folk's attitude being favourable to the Pandyas, (they being the poor successors to the ancient glory of the Pandya dynasty of yore) a great Pandya monarch Kulasekara[17] was chosen as the hero of Vallioor ballad.

Many historical events in the conflict between the Vijayanagar Emperors and Pandya local kings have been telescoped into a single war between the two.

Many independent local ballads were added on to the main theme, so that the Iver Rajakkal Kathai assumed the form of a folk epic, with different local colouring.

The tragic end of the story, of the strange marriage of the Kannada princess to the corpse of Kulasekara, whom she wanted to marry and her immolation in the funeral pyre of her 'husband' requires discussion.

According to oral versions, she came to know of the valour and heroism of Kulasekara from her father and from the reports of the generals who returned from campaigns in the south.

The ballads say that an artist came south from Vijayanagar and painted the portraits of many princes and took them to the princess. She saw Kulasekara's picture and was seized with a desire to marry him. She persuaded her father to send an emissary to negotiate marriage between Kulasekara and herself.

There is certainly no evidence for this event except in oral versions.

Her immolation therefore is a figment of folk fancy. But folks believed it to be true. There is a temple dedicated to her in a place few miles from Vallioor called Vadukachi Mathil[18] (வடுக்கச்சி மதில்) and another temple called Akkal Vadukachi Amman temple. The ballad refers to the Kannada Emperor as Kannadian or Vadukan (northerner) and his daughter as Vadukachi (northern woman).

She is believed to have committed suttee at the site of the temple, the temple having been erected as a memorial to her immolation.

Certainly the marriage of the princess to the corpse, and her performance of suttee cannot be taken as facts of history. There is no inscriptional evidence to support the reality of the two events. But the fo'k-belief, that the events are true, is based upon the tradition of chaste women in Tamil, Sanskrit literary traditions and Kannada folk traditions.

Once a woman desires to marry a man, he becomes her husband[19]. When he dies even before the marriage is celebrated, she must die with him, if she wishes to attain the status of a chaste woman. If she does not die a natural death on hearing the news of her husband's death, she must die on his funeral pyre. It was a tradition from the days of Pandiamma Devi who died on the funeral pyre of her husband 'Purananuru'.

In Kannada folk-ballad tradition, there is a type of ballads designated as Garathi Hadu. (Garathi, literally means the mistress of the house which is in usage has come to mean a chaste woman). There are many ballads about the Garathi tradition in which the chaste woman marries a corpse and dies on his funeral pyre, either because she is sold to a royal family to become the wife of a dead prince or because she has desired to marry him (Gunasagari Katha)[20]

All these traditions have combined to produce a fanciful creation of the princess marrying a corpse and immolating herself. She then attains the status of Pathini of the ancient Pathini cult (Chaste woman worship).

To sum up : The events of history as preserved in folk-memory and transmitted by oral tradition are combined as the historical framework of the ballad story.

1) A weak representative of the past glory of a dynasty

2) A mighty emperor desiring to expand and consolidate his empire in order to prevent the southward drive of the Bhamini Sultans.

3) ***The conflict :***

Local kings fight to preserve their status. The Emperor fights to expand his kingdom.

4) The inevitable doom of the local kings.

The aspiration of the folks to settle the conflict by marriage alliance between the two dynasties and their desire for peace and prosperity in their own country are reflected in the conclusion of the story.

In history, the Pandya dynasty was destroyed and the Pandyan kingdom was annexed to the Vijayanagar empire. But the folks wished that peace should prevail and the people should prosper. Their wish is fancifully expressed in the marriage between the corpse of Kulasekara and the Kannadian Princess. Her self-immolation gives her the status of a chaste-goddess, who will protect the family of the husband. Kulasekara being a king, she would protect the people of her husband's Kingdom.

From what is said above, the attitude of the folks towards the events and characters can be inferred.

1) The folks consider the victories and the glory of the ancient Pandyas as the heritage to be proud of.

2) They resent the break up of the powerful Pandyan rule into local kingdoms.

3) They associate the king with a danseuse, whom he marries, and with the poor, when he hears complaints of corruption of his officers and the activities of Veenadi Veenan.

4) Kulasekara is moulded in the tradition of ancient Tamil kings as a warrior hero.

   a. He wins many battles during his younger days.

   b. He builds a fort in his capital.

c. He marries a poor danseuse, but would not be coerced to marry the daughter of a mighty emperor. The Pandya rejects the proposal for marriage alliance, because he considers that the genealogy of the Emperor does not go back to the legendary past as that of his own. The folks are proud that Pandya is the descendant of the Pandyas of legendary and literary fame.

He has many traits of regional hero-type scale.

a) 'Birth' Royal, after austerities performed by the mother.

b) 'Brothers' Four to suit their name 'Pancha' (five) prevalent from the days of Kulothunga I.

c) Marriage — 1 To a Princess
Marriage — 2 To a beautiful danseuse

d) Campaign to win territory

e) Building a fort and a water reservoir

f) Conflict with a king more powerful than himself

g) Defeat and capture

h) Dies like a hero, taking his life rather than marry the Princess against his wish.

i) Hero deserves the sacrifice made by the Princess.

The elements which attract the admiration are b, c, e, f, h.

The Kannadian King is not treated as a villain in the story. He desires to fulfil his daughter's wish with the political aim of having an ally in the south as his feudalist in his over-all plan, of defence against Sultans. Kulasekara pours disclain and flings insult on the emissary. The Emperor had to punish the haughty prince whose ancestors had accepted suzerainty of Vijayanagar. He is also a warrior hero. But he has to be an epic villain. He is tailored for that role, by introducing a false astrologer sent to

Vallioor to prophecy the destruction of the fort on a certain date and sending spies to discover the source to the reservoir and to close it. But after the death of the hero, he magnanimously permits his daughter to marry the corpse of his enemy. On the whole the ballad image is that he is a great hero and a good father. Though the Pandya King is much below him in royal status, he desires to marry his daughter to him, because his daughter wishes to marry him.

PERIOD II

RAMAPPAYYAN AMMANAI

Just before the decline and fall of the Vijayanagar Empire, the Governors of Madura (Nayak) assumed independence.

Following the example of the Nayak, the feudalists under them asserted their independence. But Thirumalai Nayak wanted to keep them under the control of his Central Government in Madurai.

Sadaika Thevan II, the Sethupathi (local king) of Ramanathapuram committed many acts of insubordination to the Nayak. Thirumalai Nayak suspected that Sadaika was harbouring designs to become an independent ruler like himself. The integrity of the Nayak Kingdom was threatened. The Nayak sent Ramappa Ayyan his general, to subdue him and bring him to his capital in chains. Sadaika Thevan learned about the despatch of Madura troops to Ramanathapuram. He called a Council of army commanders and on its recommendation appointed his nephew Vannian as the Commander of Marava Forces. On the first and second day of battle, the Nayak army met with reverses. Six Palayakars were slain by Vannian. After six unsuccessful attacks on Vannian army, Ramappa Ayyan withdrew his troops to Madurai. He then had to take reinforcements to help Venkatapathy Raya, the Vijayanagar Emperor to repulse an attack of the Muslim invaders from the northern borders of his Empire. Ramappa returned to Madurai after inflicting a severe defeat on the invaders. He then proceeded against Vannian and met with success this time. Vannian retreated to an island in the Manner Gulf with the help of the Dutch in Ceylon,

Ramappayyan landed on the island and defeated Vannian, who lost his life in the battle. Sadaika, the ruler was captured and taken in chains to Madurai.

Ramappayyan Ammanai

The ballad relates to a miraculous incident that the iron fetters on Sadaika's hand snapped, while he was lodged in prison. Learning about this miracle, Thirumalai Nayak released him and made friends with him. Sadaika went back to Ramanathapuram and remained a faithful ally of the Nayak.

The ballads closely follow the known facts of history[21].

There are two versions of the ballad[22], one betraying favourable attitude to Ramappa(1) and the other to Sadaika(2).

The first version(1) contains accounts of episodes that blacken the reputation of Vannian.

1) His unlawful-attack on peaceful pilgrims to Rameswaram
2) His practice of black magic
3) His fierceness and cruelty to prisoners captured in war
4) Ramappa's successes are welcomed with glee

The second version reveals a favourable attitude to Vannian.

1. The Bramin General (Ramappa) is called a fox.

2. He calls the wives of the Marava prisoners, cuts the Maravas to pieces, puts the flesh in baskets and orders them to carry them away. This is an instance of his extreme cruelty.

3. When a bridge is being built to connect the mainland with the island to which Vannian had to retreat, a few persons laughed on seeing the soldiers carrying stones and mud in baskets. He forced all the people to carry stones in baskets, by the threat of whipping in public those who disobeyed his order.

4. Vannian very often refers to the 'caste qualities' of the Brahmin, when he speaks of Ramappa. He ridicules him saying

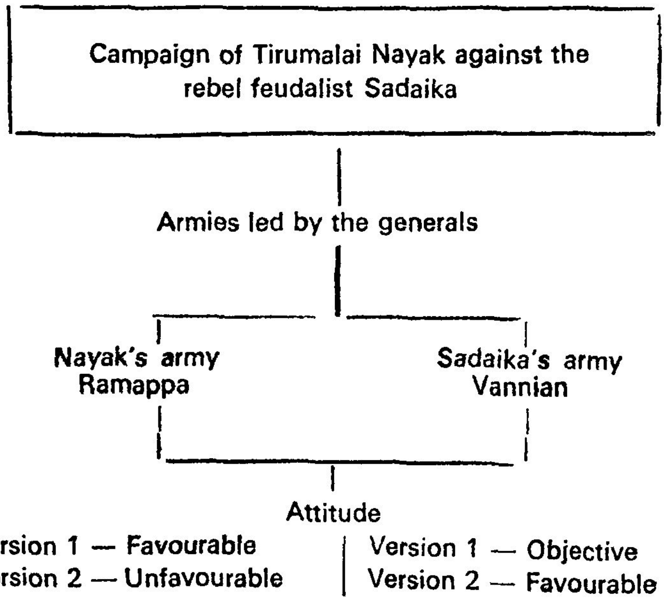
that a Brahmin should lead a pious life performing the duties of a priest in a temple. How can a Brahmin wield the sword and fight? It was the privilege of the Marava to fight.

5. While the first version mentions the success of Ramappa against the invading army of the Muslim Kings, the second is silent about it. The Folk-poet of the second version is unwilling to accept the triumphs of Ramappa.

In general, the first version is more objective, though a slant in favour of Ramappa is noticeable in it. The second is more partisan, trying to portary Vannian as a valourous hero (lion) and Ramappa as an unscrupulous schemer (fox). Yet it has to admit grudgingly that Ramappa is a hero with certain blemishes.

Folk-attitude to the heroes is not unanimous in the case of Ramappa and Vannian. The attitude can be diagrammatically pictured as follows :

HISTORICAL FACT



Version 1 considers both Ramappa and Vannian as warrior heroes. *Folk-hero traits are found in both he the characters.* It can be assessed as being closer to facts and adhering to the warrior hero image of the majority of the folk.

Version 2 is partisan It shows a favourable attitude to the Marava hero. The adversary of the Marava hero is portrayed as Ravana of Ramayana, while version 1 refers to him as a hero comparable to Rama who built a bridge across the Mannar Gulf to Lanks and killed Ravana in battle.

The second version would have us believe that the Maravas are by birth heroic and the Brahmin is fit only for the vocation of a priest.

The attitudes are therefore not unanimous. But Ramappa's *qualities of valour and abilities of leadership are highly spoken of* in both ballads. In the same way, Vannian's heroism and his power of endurance are emphasised in both versions. But the second version will not accept that Ramappa's victories are due to his superior forces, his strategy and leadership, but attributes them to sorcery and witchcraft. The second version attempts to belitlle the heroic mettle and superior abilities of Ramappa, becaue he is a Brahmin.

Iravikkutti Pillai Por[24] *(The battle of Iravikkutti)*

This is a short ballad about a hero, who fought bravely against the mighty army led by Ramappa against the Travancore Ruler with the aim of subordinating him to Tirumalai Nayak of Madurai. Iravikkutti, a minor officer of the Travancore Army, dared to oppose the onrush of the triumphant forces of Ramappa into the Travancore territory (Thiruvadi Rajyam) Due to the treachery of the feudal nobles of the kingdom (Ettu Veetu Pillaimar) plotting to kill the King, he was left alone with a small force to fight the invading army. Iravi fell in the unequal battle. His *head was cut off and carried to Ramappa.* The King of Travancore, admiring the heroism of his officer sent a request to Ramappa to send his head to be cremated with honours due to a hero. Ramappa recognised *Iravikkutti as a hero, and sent the head to the King.* The body and the head were cremated with military honours.

The ballad is based on a page from the Regional History of Travancore. Inscriptions of the period refer to battles between the army of Travancore and the Nayak forces under Ramappa. They also mention Ramappa's name. But Iravikkutti is not mentioned in any records. Perhaps he was too insignificant a person to be mentioned in royal records. His biography has been reconstructed in Travancore State Manual[5] from folk-ballads in Tamil and Malayalam and also from local tradition.

Folk-attitude to him and Ramappa is unanimous.

Both are heroes. Ramappa sends back the head, which is a gesture of respect for heroism.

Iravikkutti knows about the treacherous plot ; still he goes into battle knowing fully well that his efforts were foredoomed. The King recognises his heroism.

The folks' admiration for unflinching heroism and loyalty to his King is reflected in both Malayalam and Tamil ballads. The admiration of the folks is also due to the low-class origin of Iravikkutty.

KHAN SAHEB CHANDAI[26]

This ballad has for its theme the fortunes of Khansaheb during the last seven years of his life.

The circumstances of his life are briefly told in the first part of the ballad. Born in Panaiyur, he was brought up by Musa Lawley. Then he joined service under a British Army Officer, Brittaine, and leaving it, went to serve the Nawab of Arcot. Step by step, he rose to be a commandant of the Nawab's army. His services were placed under a British Commander. Leading British troops, he dislodged the French from Parangimalai. He married a Ferunghi girl (Indo-European) named Masha.

Pleased with his meritorious services, the company appointed him commander at Madurai, charging him to untertake an expedition to collect arrears of revenue for the Nawab from the Polygars of Tirunelveli District. The Nawab had farmed out the revenues of

the District to the East India Company. Khan Saheb was to combine in himself the duties of Revenue Collector and Military Commander, holding the post of Subedar of Madurai (Governor).

His campaign against the Polygar of Tirunelveli, who had defaulted in payment of taxes, is not described in the ballad. The Sivaganga Polygar did not recognise him as Subedar and never made prompt payments of tax when demanded by him.

He sent a letter to the Polygar of Sivaganga demanding the cession of a village, Tripuvanam to him as full settlement of the arrears. The Dalavoi (Chief Administrative Officer) or Sivaganga, Thandavaroyan, a shrewd Vellala, tried to please Khan Saheb with sweet words addressed to him and costly presents to Masha. All this was of no avail. Khan Saheb could not be swerved from his determination to grab Tripuvanam from Sivaganga Palayam.

Thandavaroyan met Muthu Vadukan, the Polygar of Sivaganga, and reported about the threats of Khan Saheb. He persuaded him to leave Sivaganga and take refuge at the fortress of Kalaiyarkoil. He alerted the Marava Chieftains of Ramanathapuram District and left for 'Arcot' with the intention of reporting Khan Saheb's activities to his master, Mohamed Ali, the Nawab. The Dalavoi took a long list of complaints against Khan Saheb to be lodged in the Court of the Nawab. They included charges like the following :

1) Misappropriation of monies collected as revenue from Polygars

2) His attempt to seize fertile lands in the territories of the friendly Palayam of Sivaganga and turn the ruler to be hostile to the British

3) Forging secret alliances with the enemies of the British (Haidar)

4) Collecting a huge force to defend himself against the Nawab and the British in case of a siege.

5) Intention to declare himself Nawab of Madurai

6) He was manufacturing cannons with the help of Merchand, a French armourer

Thandavaroyan met the Nawab and successfully convinced him that Khan Saheb had turned hostile and intended to assert his independence after strengthening his position in Madurai. The Nawab decided to send an army under a British General to remove Khan Saheb from his post.

Just before Thandavarayan's meeting with the Nawab, Khan Saheb had been transferred from service under the East India Company to the Nawab's service, which he resented very much. He refused to obey the order of the Company and remained in his post at Madura independent of the Company and also of the Nawab.

A force consisting of British soldiers and Indian sepoys under the command of the Company's commander Brittaine, arrived in Tirupuvanam to which Khan Saheb had made claim. The force could not march forward to Madurai, because of incessant harassment by the guerilla bands of Khan Saheb, They hid by day and emerged during night and fell upon the encampments of the Nawab's troops. After a long delay and loss of material and men, they at last arrived before the gates of Madurai. The siege was long drawn out. Khan Saheb held out for months. The breaches made by cannon shells were repaired then and there. Even after a siege of six months, Brittaine was unable to capture the fort.

He then took recourse to bribery and villainy. Srinivas Rao, the Dalavoi of Khan Saheb and Merchand the armourer were bribed to betray their master. They fell upon him when he was walking unarmed to the mosque to say his prayers in the evening. They could seize him, bind him and hand him over to Brittaine. He was hanged within minutes of his capture.[27]

The historical Khan Saheb is a remarkable military leader and a consummate political figure. Contemporary accounts of his career are available from British counterparts like Colonel Orme. Later authentic accounts are also found in the writings of Caldwell and Pate. It is relevant to summarise his biography from materials available for comparison with the folk-image reflected by the ballad.

1. Born of a Hindu Mudaliar family

2. Worked as a servant in a French army Officer's house

3. Conversion to Islam and service in Nawab's army

4. Transferred to the army of the East India Company - Dislodged the French from Parangipettai - Won the favour of the British Officers.

5. In the struggle between Mohamed Ali and Chanda Saheb for succession to the Nawabship of the Carnatic Khan Saheb fought on the side of Mohamed Ali.

6. Became a confidant of Mohamed Ali, because of his faithful service to him during the period of his struggle with Chanda Saheb, helped by the French.

7. Mohamed Ali becomes Nawab-Appoints Khan Saheb, commandant of a force sent to collect arrears of revenue in Tirunelveli District, and bring order out of chaos in the struggle for enlargement of territory among the Polygars.

8. Eminently successful in his mission in Tirunelveli - Achieves what the British Army Officers could not accomplish - Brought under submission the most powerful local Kings and Polygars, e. g. Sethupathi Raja of Ramanathapuram, Renter Dalavoi Mudaliar, Puli Thevan, the leader of the confederacy of Polygars of the west.

9. Broke the confederation by defeating the Raja of Travancore and Puli Thevan.

10. Forced Yusuf Khan, Mohamed Khan's brother and rival claimant to the Nawabship of Carnatic, to submit and retire to Arcot.

Yusuf Khan's successes in his **campaign is narrated by** Caldwell thus :

"Yusuf returned to Tirunelveli in 1759. He directed his efforts to disurpt the confederacy. He undertook a series of operations one after another. He captured Kollankondan, a fort under the occupation of Puli Thevan in the west. He turned east and took Kolvarpalli. He turned west and occupied Surandai. The Travancore troops were pillaging the country in the area around Kalakad. He entered into an alliance with them and not only turned them away from the confederacy, but secured their help against his enemy Pull Thevan and his allies opposed the Nawab. Then he marched to Vadagarai and captured the fort there. The Polygar fled to Vasudevanallur, a fortress within the palayam of Puli Thevan. It was the centre of activity and headquarters of the confederates. Many attempts by English Commanders to capture this fort had failed. Yusuf Khan stormed it. Puli Thevan suddenly appeared from Nelkattumseval in the rear of Khan's force. Though Yusuf continued the attack on the fortress, his position became more and more hopeless. So he decided to withdraw. Just then the Dutch had landed at Tuticorin, perhaps at the invitation of the confederates. They marched towards Alwarthirunagari. Yusuf Khan marched to meet the Dutch Troops. He could not meet them, because they had retreated to Tuticorin and thence to Ceylon.

The successes of Khan Saheb compelled the Polygard to lie low. All was quiet in the south for the Nawab.

The position of Yusuf Khan was unassailable, and he rented the revenues of the Tirunelveli District for a low lease of seven lakhs per annum. The growing might and power of Yusuf Khan at Madurai aroused suspicion in the minds of the British Officers of the Company and the Nawab, that he was recruiting a strong army and negotiating with the Polygars and with Haidar to form a confederacy to remove British power from Madurai. British intelligence estimated his force as consisting of 27,000 men. He was also believed to receive support from all quarters opposed to the growing power of the British in the south. Being a soldier of fortune without and hereditary noble tradition, he desired to win the goodwill and support of the masses by executing public works and providing an efficient administration. He successfully won the hearts of the people.

But he could not change the attitude of animosity of the Polygars like Puli Thevan, because he had fought and suppressed them. They had suffered at his hands. Their attitude remained unfavourable till his death. Seeds of decline of his power sprouted from the effects of his own successes and watered by treachery and disloyalty of his own faithless officers, he met his downfa'l.

Colonel Mansar commanded the combined forces of the British and the Nawab, who after a protracted siege, took the fort of Madurai and captured Khan Saheb. He was hanged immediately after his capture.

Attitude of the folks to the heroes of the ballad

The ballad narrates briefly the activities of Yusuf Khan against the French. His rise to fame and power is due to his campaigns against the Polygars. But they are not narrated in the ballad. The ballad restricts itself to describing the career of Khan Saheb during the last seven years of his life, after he became the Governor of Madurai.

The hero of the ballad is not Khan Saheb, but Thandavarayan, the minister of the Polygar of Sivaganga. He is enraged when Khan Saheb demands the cession of Tripuvanam to him. Desiring to bring about Khan's downfall, he goes to the Nawab to acquaint him with the treacherous activities of Khan Saheb, and persuade him to send an army to remove Khan from the Subedarship of Madurai. The ballad portrays him as a wily scheming politician, who outwits all the other characters of the ballad, who confront him. While the British commanders fail to defeat the Khan in battle, Thandavaroyan opens the gates of Madurai fort with gold and captures him making use of fraud and treachery. The strength and valour of the Khan (lion) is of no avail before the cunning of Thandavaroyan (jackal). The warrior hero meets his doom at the hands of the shrewd scheming politician.

The ballad would have us believe that Khan Saheb failed to secure the support and alliance of the Polygars of the neighbouring Palayams of Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram and also the Polygars of Tirunelveli, because he cast greedy looks on the

territories of Sivaganga. The Tirunelveli Polygars looked upon him as their investerate enemy, who desired to destory them. Hence when Madurai was attacked, no one rallied to his support.

The attitude of the folk-poet, accepted by the folks is as follows :

Khan Saheb	Thandavaroyan
Folks:	Folks:
1) Admire his valour	1) Admire his cunning add cleverness.
2) Consider him a warrior hero	2) Consider him as a fox outwitting a lion
3) Condemn his greedy wish to seize Tirupuvanam	3) Cast him in the role of defender of his King's rights.
4) Praise his dogged defence of Madurai against odds	4) Admire his wily amoral scheming.
5) Though a converted Muslim, his marriage with a Indo-European girl is welcomed against caste-sex rules.	5) His wile is mocked at by the warrior heroes. The poet's attitude is one of admiration.
6) His martyrdom is lamented.	
7) He was himself a Muslim, but he fought against the invasion of the Nawab with the support of the British. This attitude is supported by the folk-poet.	7) Though a Vellala, he pays homage and obeisance to the Marava King transgressing caste rules. This is intended to portray him as a devoted servant of his King.
8) His attempt to enter into a confederacy with all the opponents of the British. This idea of a united front is welcomed by local tradition.	8) His cunning and shrewdness is counterposed is counterposed to Khan's valour and heroism.

Khan Saheb	Thandavaroyan
9) His refusal to listen to his wife's entreaties to come to terms with Thandavaroyan is considered as unreasonable adamant, and the cause of his downfall.	9) Thandavaroyan attempts to prevent cession of territory by making Masha plead for his cause. Though an Indo-European is considered an untouchable, the high caste Vellala calls her his own sister to persuade her to plead for him.
10) Local traditions at Khansa-puram, Tharuvai, Kongam-thanparai — all point to his interest to improve the lot of his people. This draws praise from the folks.	10) His efforts to save the fertile region of Tripuvanam for his King is admired, because he works in the interests of - his King and the people.

The hero, according to the admission of the folk-poet is Thandavaroyan and not Khan Saheb. That is why the earlier biography of Khan, his triumphal campaign in Tirunelveli is omitted in the ballad. But admiration for heroism remaining both a folk and literary tradition, the poet could not but admire the role of the Khan in guerilla warfare at Tirupuvanam and the holding out of his force in the fort of Madurai during the siege. The inevincibility of a warrior-hero in addition, is preserved by the introduction of treachary as the means of capturing him. Though the ballad is intended to make the shrewd Vellala a hero, it has to follow the heroic tradition of Tamil culture and accept the Khan as a great hero. The folk-values and attitudes are reflected both in the characterisation of Khan Saheb and Thandavaroyan. No judgment is passed on ethical grounds, as to who fought for a just cause, the Khan or Thandavaroyan.

Puli Thevan, the Polygar of Nelkattumseval, who attempted to challenge the power of the Nawab, by becoming the leader of a confederacy of Polygars of the western region of Tirunelveli

District. is considered by Marava caste-groups as a great hero. This was not only because of caste considerations, but also because he was a warrior-hero, who caused a revolt against the Nawab and challenged the right of the British Company to collect taxes and take punitive action against the defaulters. He was able to unite most of the Polygars, a few of whom belonged to his caste and obtain the support of local kings who wanted to expand their own territory, taking advantage of the troubled situation in the country. The Marava caste-groups and also the other caste-groups believed him to be the champion of their interests. Believing so, they rallied to his support. The British Commanders, who fought against him, have left reminiscences of the battles, in which they were locked in combat against him. They shower high praise on him. It is therefore reasonable to consider him as a regional hero. Local traditions exist to indicate that he was of low-birth, was excommunicated from the caste in which he was born (Marava) because of his close alliance with Chakklis and Valaiyars, the lowest castes in the place of his birth. He had to leave his place of birth and migrate with his supporters to the western hills and settle at Nelkattumseval. After the death of the Polygar in power there, he seized the Polygarship with the support of Maravas, Chakklis, and Valaiyars. He forged unity among the traditionally hostile caste-groups and used it to oppose the Nawab and his supporters. Thus he became the leader of the Polygars, who were prepared to fight against the threat of annexation of their local kingdoms by the Nawab into the Kingdom of Arcot.

Thus the local hero in the place of his birth, adhering to the monotype combination, low birth, support to low-caste people, conflict with the dominant caste group, on leaving his place of birth, becomes a leader and all mark him out as a local hero. His defiance of the Nawab and his war with the British to defend his own interests and also those of his low-caste supporters attract favourable reaction among the Polygar class. He is then accepted as their leader who strengthens his hand to fight against the ruling power, the Nawab, propped up by the British Company.

He then emerges as a regional or 'National' hero, playing a significant role in the resistance movement againt the Nawabdom.

The construction of this image is based upon two local traditions about him, the first prevailing at the place where he developed as local hero, and the second in the place where he fought against the Nawab. But the ballad, Khan Saheb Chandai portrays him in a different manner. In the ballad, he plays a disgraceful minor role. He is said to live in Arcot under the tutelage of the Nawab, advising the Nawab to refuse to meet Thandavaroyan. Thandavaroyan refers to him as a despicable wretch, who had betrayed the interests of the Polygars for his personal advantage.

Historical facts contradict this image of Puli Thevan. Records of the Histroy of Tirunelveli reveal that he defended the Vasudevanallur Fort in 1767, three years after the death of Khan Saheb against the attack of Major Campbell. The fort was captured by Campbell, and after the event, nothing is heard of Puli Thevan. Many legends exist which state that he disappeared in the temple of Sankarankoil and merged his soul with the linga in the temple. Such legends can be taken to mean that he took his life at Sankarankoil.

But why does the ballad about the battle against Khan Saheb demote him to the position of a slave of the same Nawab, against whom he had fought all his life and was considered by the British Company and the Nawab as a formidable challenger of the expansion of their power in Tirunelveli ?

The reason for this transformation of character in the ballad must be attributed to the attitude of the ballad-poet who represented the interests of Thandavaroyan and his own caste-group. The aim of the ballad was to portray the shrewd Vellala as a hero who saved Sivaganga from its threatened doom. Then Thandavaroyan the hero had to take up an attitude towards an important character in the story of the turmoil of the period, Puli Thevan. Sivaganga a local Marava kingdom did not join the confederacy led by Puli Thevan ranged against the Nawab and the British, because of two reasons.

1) Puli Thevan was a social rebel with no hereditary noble pretensions, while Sivaganga was an old palayam, with a large territory.

2) From the beginning of its establishment to the last decade of the 18th century, Sivaganga rulers wanted to be at peace with the aggressive Nawab. So their attitude to Puli Thevan was unfavourable.

The Vellala, who represented the interests of the ruler of Sivaganga, should have had the same attitude to Puli Thevan as that of his master. So the poet follows the logic, 'my master's enemy is my enemy' and portrays Puli Thevan as a slave of the Nawab trying to incite him, not to listen to the request of Thandavaroyan.

The insertion speaks against the whole character image of Puli Thevan as known to local folk-traditions and recorded history.

Puli Thevan's local hero image could not have drawn a favourable reaction from the master of Thandavaroyan. Thandavaroyan himself, as pictured in the ballad, considers his cunning and shrewdness more powerful than valour in battle. He boasts that he would defeat Khan by his shrewdness. His political astuteness was a sharper weapon than the steel-sword wielded by Khan.

Both from recorded history and oral traditions, Puli Thevan was an Inveterate enemy of Khan with whom he had fought several battles. Khan also considered Puli Thevan as a formidable obstacle to his success. How could Puli Thevan be expected to induce the Nawab to refuse to meet Thandavaroyan, the object of whose mission was widely known to be the seizure of Madurai fort and removal of Khan Saheb from power. Puli Thevan should have been happy that circumstances were turning in the direction of the fall of Khan Saheb from power. There is no evidence for believing that Puli Thevan ever made up with the Nawab and with the British.

Therefore the image of Puli Thevan as projected by the ballad has to be rejected as non-historical.

Thandavaroyan, the hero has none of the traits a local hero or a regional hero of tradition. He is sought to be introduced as a scribe hero, who could manoeuvre in courts, set powerful enemies against each other and lick the blood dropping from the wounds of

both, in the manner of the fox in the Panchatantra. Thandavarayan is a hero without heroism who belongs to the class of scribes and manoeuvrers, who could not exhibit valour, bravery or dedication to a cause.

The tremendous influence of folk-concept of the heroism could not be slurred over in the ballad. The heroes, who adhere to folk-values of hero, are Khan Saheb and Puli Thevan. The ballad grudgingly admits Khan as a hero. Sneaking admiration for Khan's sagacity and valour is quite evident, when battles are described. But the ballad-poet could not accept Puli Thevan's heroism, for the reason already mentioned. His admiration being on the side of the Sivaganga ruler and his protector Thandavaroyan, he could not but reflect their own attitude to Puli Thevan as an upstart with no noble pretensions.

To sum up :

In spite of the hero of the ballad being a non-warrior — manoeuverer interest surrounds only around Khan Sahab and his exploits as the title 'battle of Khan Saheb' suggests. Khan Saheb emerges as a hero, while the folk-poet begins describing battles in spite of his contrary intention to make Thandavarayan a hero.

He could never lift Thandavarayan to the hero status of folk-hero type, because he never fought, but only threatened to fight. The army, that followed him on his trip to Arcot, was only a retinue to impress on the Nawab the strength of Sivaganga.

The 'heroic' exploits of Thandavarayan are just the trickery of the fox against the valour of the lion. After all, the fox could vanquish the lion by amoral means.

Kattabomman

The next group of ballads centres round the resistance of two Polygars, who fought British expansion in the South con -sistently and bravely till the last moments of their lives.

They are Kattabomman lore and Marudhu lore, available as ballads and also as oral tradition. The most widely circulated lore

is about - Kattabomman. He is the most popular image of an adopted hero in Tamil Nadu - a regional type.

I have already dealt with his story and ballads about him elaborately while discussing the typology of folk-heroes. His biography as portrayed by folk-ballads were taken as materials to assign him to a type — the adopted hero of ruling class origin. I have instanced Kattabomman and Khan Saheb as belonging to the adopted hero type. They are made heroes by all sections of society.

Marudhu[29]

Cnronologically the career of Marudhu falls just after the death of Khan Saheb. Sivaganga, at the time of Khan Saheb was subservient to the Nawab and the Company. The nature of relations between Sivaganga and the combination of the Nawab and the Company changed from acceptance of a subordinate position by the former to one of resistance and struggle against the latter. Vadugan, the Polygar of Sivaganga fought against the combination and died due to a wound received in the battle against a force led by a British Commander, who represented the interests of the Nawab and the Company. His widow Velu Nachiar assumed Polygarship and continued the policy of resistance to the aggressors with the unstinted support of the Marudhu brothers, who had served as faithful subalterns under her husband. She left her Kingdom, stayed at Dindigal attempting to gather a force to recapture Sivaganga. For ten years she had to live in voluntary exile, while the Marudhu brothers exerted themselves to form an army of liberation and gain support from the Polygars, opposed to the British expansion. They led guerilla attacks and iooted the granaries and treasuries of the Nawab. Their guerilla detachments and suicide squads fell upon the British camps of soldiers causing damage and death, resulting in the fall of morale among them. The peasantury was petsuaded to refuse payment of taxes. The Nawab's administration could not be carried on. The Nawab's officers and their prop, the British troops, left Sivaganga to fate and retreated to Arcot. Velu Nachiar was brought back to Sivaganga and installed as Rani.

To ensure the succession of the Polygarship to his staunchest supporter, the elder Marudhu, she married him and nominated him, her successor. Marudhu was not born of the same subdivision of jati as Velu Nachiyar. It was both a marriage of love and political exigency. This stroke of political sagacity enraged the Nawab and the Company. They refused to recognise him as the Polygar of Sivaganga. But at the same time, they demanded payment of tribute from him. Marudhu pointed out that since he was not recognised as a Polygar by those who demanded tribute and because he was the successor to the independent polygarship of his deceased wife, he would not pay any tribute. The conflict aggravated, leading to several battles.

In spite of the hostile actions of the duel political powers trying to overcome the whole of Tamil Nadu, he ruled at Sivaganga for eighteen years.

After the fall of Panchalamkurichi to the British, and the hanging of Kattabomman In 1799 Major Bannerman, the victor, marched against Sivaganga. A series of battles took place at Kamuthi, Parthipanor and Ramanathapuram. When the British Commander arrived in Siruvayal, a beautiful town, he found it in flames. Marudhus had left the town setting fire to it. They had retreated to a strong fortress, Kalaiyarkoil, which was in the midst of a thick forest. The British troop cut down the trees in the forest. The British troop was wiped off in a few days. The British soldiers could not advance a single inch due to surprise attacks by Sivaganga sepoys entrenched at Kalaiyarkoil fortress.

The British army was assisted by Thondaiman of Pudukkottai, a traditional friend of the British and an enemy of the Polygars hostile to the British. Even with the assistance of the neighbouring kingdom, the British could not make any headway. Therefore they attempted to break the unity of the Sivaganga sepoys on the basis of jati. They caught hold of a pretender to the kingship of Sivaganga, Udayana Thevan by name and installed him as King of Sivaganga.

Udayana was a Marava, while Marudhu was a Servai. In caste ranking, the latter was lower than the former. Caste affinities being strong among the two sub-jatis, this event divided

Marudhu's army on the basis of jati affiliation. A large section of Maravas were weaned away from Marudhu. Inspired rumours were circulaled among the local population, that Marudhu had hidden away gold at the roots of trees in Kalayarkoil forest. Thus the greed of the local people was aroused. A large number of people entered the forest in search of treasure to cut down trees. Thus the forest which could not be cleared in two days by the British was denuded in a few hours. The British troops crossed the deforested plain and arrived at Kalaiyarkoil fortress. It fell to them after a valiant defence by the Marudhus. But they could not capture the Marudhus and Umaidurai, who had received their protection after the fall of Panchalamkurichi. They had made good their escape the previous night. Search parties were despatched by the victors to capture them. The valiant Polygars who were the last remnants of the Polygar resistance were seized and killed. Umaidurai was hanged at Panchalamkurichi, the place where he had ruled, and Marudhu's head was cut off, because he had requested the British Commander not to hang him. In compliance with his request, his head was buried, in front of the temple-tower he had constructed. This amounts to a recognition of his heroism by his enemy.

Folk-attitude to Marudhu

The folk-origin of the Marudhu brothers is described in the ballad. They were sons of a hound-keeper of the Raja of Ramanathapuram. Marudhas accompanied the Raja in his hunting expeditions. Because of his skill in hunting and devotion to the Raja, the elder Marudhu became the personal secretary (Adaippan) of the Raja. He is considered a son of the folks of the folk-ballad. The folk rejoice in his successes and rise to fame.

2) Their services to the queen and their devotion to her attract the admiration of the ballad-poet. They stick to her through thick and thin. She repays the elder Marudhu's devoted services, by making him her successor by marriage. Her faithfulness and gratitude to one who has helped her, draw the praise of the poet. It is rare to find a member of the ruling class, to be so faithful to a hero of low-birth and pass on one's own office to him, however great his services may be. The members of the ruling class

generally make use of the skill and strength of the folk-heroes and kick them off when their influence grows so much as to threaten their own high position. Instances already mentioned are Chinnathambi and Madurai Veeren, whose popularity began to put their masters in the shade. The folk-poet appreciates Velu Nachiar's sincere gratitude to Marudhu and her concern for the people under her rule. She thus becomes an adopted heroine, of the folks (FMW). The folk-attitude to members of the ruling class, who trick and kill their own folk-helpers is quite unfavourable (towards the killers of Chinnathambi and Madurai Veeran). On the other hand the folk-attitude as revealed in the ballad is favourable and sympathetic to Velu Nachiar. Although her marriage with Marudhu is socially unacceptable on caste and status considerations, the folk-poet is sympathetic towards the couple and considers their marriage as a stroke of political wisdom. Being a widow, she could not adopt a son who could succeed her. The Company would not recognise an adopted son of a widow as her heir. So she decides to marry her faithful helper and staunch champion of her interests and those of the people of Sivaganga.

Elder Marudhu has many of the elements composing the folk-hero image.

1. Low-birth — Belongs to the folk-stratum of society — Son of a hound-keeper in the service of the Raja of Ramanathapuram.

2. He gets trained in his father's job. His father trains him as a horse-rider and hound-keeper.

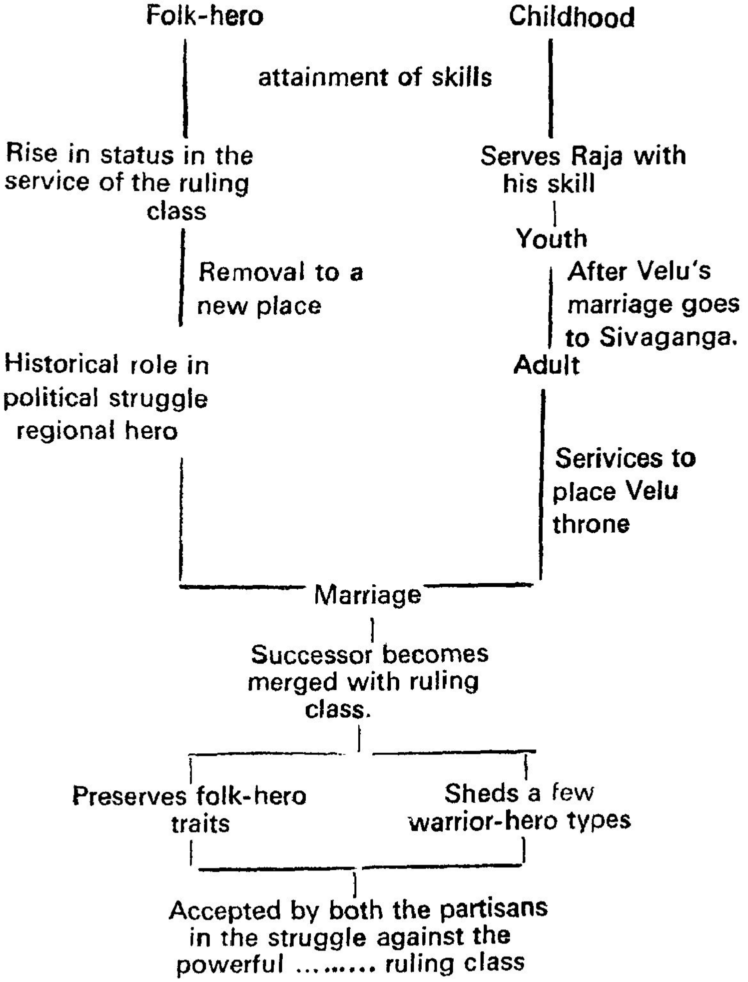
3. He leaves his parental home after the marriage of Velu Nachiar, daughter of his master to her husband's home.

4. Devoted service to her in her days of trial — Success in restoring her husband's throne to her.

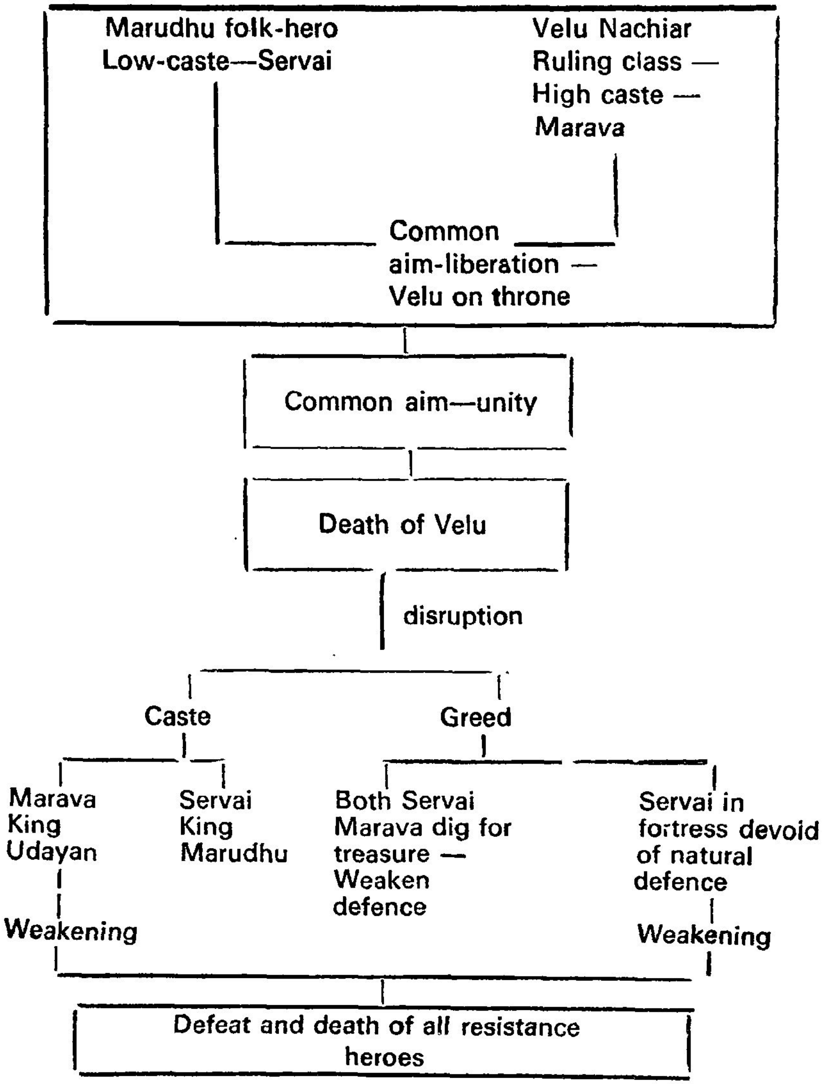
At this stage the traditional folk-hero will attain popularity, according to folk-hero bio-pattern, that will arouse the jealously of his master, who will cause his death.

In the case of Marudhu, his struggle against the Nawab and the British has won for him the political leadership of the people. He has become a leader of the resistance-struggle and a people's leader in his own right. Velu Nachiar is a rare exception, who desires to place him on the throne in the interests of the people. She has experienced suffering in her struggle for her throne and also for liberating her people from the yoke of the Nawab. Marudhu was the instrument of destiny, which she wanted to strengthen. Their marriage was not a consummation of sex-attraction, but a union of like-minded men and woman with coincident aims.

Here is a rare transmutation of folk-hero into a national hero, accepted into its own fold by the regional leader of the ruling class. This is due to the common danger to the folks and the ruling class alike, from the occupation of Sivaganga by the Nawab and the British. The marriage of the queen with a folk-hero enables him to meterialize a united front of the masses and the rulers against the common danger of an invader. The scheme of Marudhu's biography according to the theory of folk-hero regional or national hero transformation is as follows :



His downfall is caused by a rival ruling class desiring to suppress all Polygars and unite the region under it rule. War proving to yield no success to the enemies, they resort to subterfuge and manoeuvre. Making use of caste-affinities and the greed of the folks, they bring about the doom of Marudhu. The national hero who succeeded in uniting all social elements could not prevent disruption, when traditional caste-sentiments and greed for private possession were let loose. The following scheme will make the concept clear.



Conclusions

1. Historical ballads contribute materials of corroborative evidence to cognise historical facts. Instances of such materials may be cited.

a) The involvement of the Dutch in the naval battle of Pamban (Ramappa Ayyan Ammanai)

b) Construction of a bridge from Rameswaram to Pamban enlisting all sections of the people to perform manual labour (R-A)

c) The battle against a detachment of the Mughal army by Rayas, is which Thirumalai Nayak participated (R - A)

d) The question when Thirumalai Nayak threw off his tributory status (R - A)

2. The social conditions and beliefs of the folks in magic and religion (R - A)

3. The attitutes of different job-groups to incidents of history (R - A)

4. (a) The activities of the Marudhus aiming at uniting all forces of opposition to the Nawab and the British (Sivaganga Sindhu and Ammanai (SSA)

(b) His guerilla activities paralysing the Nawab's administration and panicking the British army (SSA)

(c) Methods adopted by the British to weaken the defence of Kalaiyarkoil (SSA)

5. (a) Had Kattabomman secured the services of Vellaiyan and Thanapathi (Kattabomman Kathai Patal KKP)

(b) Jackson's strategy to brand Kattabomman as a bandit (KKP)

(e) A description of the Panchalamkurichi fort (KKP) and how it was built.

(d) His defence in the trial before he was hanged.

(e) His last words under the gallows (KKP)

f. The Polygars who supported him and those who supported the British (KKP)

g The reasons for the feud between Ettayapuram and Panchalamkurichi (KKP)

Many more instances can be multiplied, but this will serve the purpose of instancing.

6. Names of places, where battles took place are recorded. (Khan Saheb Chandai - KKP, SSA)

II. No other records give us as much information as folk-ballads, about social conditions and attributes of the period to which the incidents narrated refer.

The state of caste-unity or conflict (KKA, RA, SSA)

Traditions relating to meeting between men of different social ranks (KKP, Khan Saheb Chandai)

III. Folk-attitudes are brought out only by Folk-narratives.

Attitudes to Velu Nachiar, Marudhu and Kattabomman are critically appreciative.

IV. Ballads are not historical records. They *are primarily* folk-literary creations exalting and appreciating what the folks value, and depreciating what the folks devalue.

They appreciate Chinnathambi, Muthuppattan for crossing the caste-sex rules or caste-profession rule.

They condemn the rulers who brought about their death.

They admire Marudhu and Velu Nachiar for marrying, transgressing caste-sex rules, for working for coincident aims that may result in the liberation of Sivaganga from the Nawab and establish a rule sympathetic to the folks. They condemn the foul means resorted to by the British and the Nawab in bringing about the folk of Khan Saheb and Marudhu.

The folks have an unwritten code of ethical conduct for their rulers and masters and pass rigorous judgments on them. They don't mince words.

The unequivocal condemnation of members of the ruling class, who plot to kill the local hero not submissive to them, is found in all ballads. Unconcealed admiration for all those who are unselfish, devotion to a cause, kindness and sympathy for the folks, attainment of success in human endeavours, challenging jati rules that crush the liherty of the folks, any deed done by the rulers favourable to the interests of the folks and many more are elements of good conduct,

They hate duplicity, greed, selfishness, splitting the unity of the folks using jati prejudices, cheating the folk, exploiting their ignorance and similar deeds on the part of historical persons.

The ballads set up a gallaxy of heroes, who should adhere to the ethical code of the folks mentioned before. Their literary villains are those who possess the blacklisted traits of the folk-ethical code.

Historical ballads just like other types of ballads are not for mere entertainment, but for educating society in judging what is good and what is bad in men and movements and in persuading men to follow the folk-code of ethics, which is substantially opposed to the elite Dharmic code in relation to the rights and duties of persons belonging to different jatis and classes.

Ballads are therefore intended for purposeful, educative and enlightening entertainments of the folks. They rouse righteous indignation against oppression, tyranny, trickery and treachery.

The period of the folk literary age of the ballads saw the resurgence of folk musical and literary forms. Various folk-art forms were preserved, improved upon and developed. To mention just a few of these forms, 'Oyil Kummi' in Tirunelveli and Ramanathapuram Districts, a brisk musical dance performed by men, 'Villuppattu' (bow song) a form of narrative of stories partly in prose, 'Sindu' a song form sung in chorus by men and women, 'Lavani a narrative in duet form sung by two persons, a man and a woman, accompanied by 'Thappu, Makutam, Tape, (Tamil), 'Thodda Hadu' (Karnataka) a narrative sung to the accompaniment of a large percussion instrument played with fingers using one hand while the other holds the instrument. The narratives are also

staged as plays with a large dose of songs as Koothu (Tamil Nadu) Yakshaganam (Karnataka), Ottam Thullal (Kerala) monoacting on stage. The literary composition of ballads has created for narration numerous forms of communication of the themes to the audience. It has also produced a fertile crop of folk-instruments for accompaniment in singing.

The folk-ballads of a period perform the functions of an epic major or minor for the folk-segment as its literary elite segment society. It is the most important folk literary production, having its impact on the transformation and to higher and higher levels of social consciousness of the folk, the folks that ensure more and more democratic participation of the Indian rural masses making the history of their country.

Therefore folklore study, to be purposeful and enlightening, should concern itself in :

1) Collecting different versions of historical ballads and printing them.

2) Study of the themes and attempting atypology

3) Comparision with recorded history and cognition of history integrating folk-attitudes with elite attitudes — Where these two contradict each other, the nature of the contradiction should be faithfully described.

4) There is a dictum that man makes history. Man is understood by Carlyle and other hero-worshippers as Kings, Emperors, Conquerors, Poets and Statesmen. I believe with the Marxists that history is the movement caused by the social activity of mankind. The folks are the working people, who by their production of goods and ideas change the world. When they produce no ideas, they accept the ideas of their masters, the ruling class in part.

It is therefore necessary to know the folk-life of the people, their social thoughts and deeds, to understand the history of the period. Historical ballads and other historical folklore should be studied to construct changing models of a period of history considered as social movement of men, in which they act together and

think together for expanding their freedom. The forces, that restrict the freedom of the people to keep them subservient to them, try to distort and conceal facts of folk-life and thoughts. The folk-scholar should sympathetically understand folk-life, folk-beliefs, folk - thoughts and attitudes and compare them with non-folk material to arrive at a comprehension of historical movement. The attempts of D. D. Kosambi to produce models of periods in his Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India and Myth Reality is an examplary work in this direction of integrating folk and literary materials and both their traditions. If folk-materials are left out of account in the reconstruction of Indian history, historical models will degenerate into sectarian conceptual images and cognitive results of the upper stratum of society. It will remain a surface history and not the history of the whole society, the majority of members constituting it being the folks.

1) Pandyas, Sultans, Nayaks, Khan Saheb etc.

2) Mutharaiyar, Cholas, Pandyas, Nayaks, Maharashtras.

3) Studies in Tamil folk-literature 5·1, 5·2, 5·4, 5·5 resistance to exhorbitant taxation

4) Articles on India — K. Mark

4) (a) Rathi Urvakkuti Manvilakku Mannan Kathai Author— Chidampara Pulavar — Ed. Centamil Selvan, Tuticorin. Nadar Mannarum Nayaka Mannarum

5) Iver Rajakkal Kathai, Madurai University, 1972—only the story of a summary of this version

6) Vettumperumal Kathai — MSS unpublished

7) Nadar Mannarum Nayaka Mannarum Gurukkal - 1939 Copies not available — I read the book obtaining an old copy from R. Namakannu, Srivaikuntam

8) Oral traditions — Vallioor — K. Muthiah, retired Head-master, Govt. High Schools — native of Vallioor — information obtained in 1943. I saw the remnants of the fort and the inscription on the walls of Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple, Kayatar - Sevuga Pandian, native of Kayatar (1970)

9) Shenbagaraman Pattu — Second edition
Edited M. J. Kalmigarayan 1947 - Nagercoil

10) Veeradhi Veeran Kathai and Idaichi Kathai - Episodes found in Iver Rajakkal Kathai - Bib. 5

11) Ibid - 10

12) Shenbagaraman Pattu - Ref. 9

13) Madurai Vijayam - Sanskrit text and English translation- Edited S. Thiruvenkatachari - Annamalai University. The account of invasion of Kannada rulers is based upon S. Thiruvenkatachari's introduction to the book.

14) Tirunelveli District Gazetteer - Edited H. R. Pate -1919 - Page 318

At Ilavelangal an inscription mentions a battle between Vettumperumal and Venkala Raja. 'A Kondayankottai Marava put him to death. Date of the inscription, 1547.

15) 'The Tamil country under Vijayanagar'

Annamalai University - Historical series No. 20. Annamalai University - Edited S. Krishnasamy. The account about Pandya - Raya relations is based upon this work.

16) Makat Kotai Marutham Instances are found in Purananooru.

17) Many powerful kings, who ruled in succession after Sundera Pandya I (13th century) were known by the name Kulasekara.

18) A small village four miles from Vallioor.

19) Cilappatikaram concept of chastity

20) Gunasagari Katha (Kannada) - Karnataka University - Dharwar, Edited M. S. Sunkapur - A ballad about a chaste woman

21) *The Nayaks of Madurai- R. Sathianantha Iyer, University* of Madras

22) Ramayyan Ammanai (*Tamil*) *Madras Government* Oriental Series XLL, Introduction and notes C.M. Ramachandran Chettiar, 1950 (Version 1)

23) Ramappa Ayyan Ammanai - Madras University Tamil series 17 - Edited S. Vaiyapuri Pillai 1951, Version 2

24) 'Iravikkutti Pillai Por - Printed as an appendix to Ramappa Ayyan Ammanai - Foot-note 23

25) 'Travancore State Manual' Pub. Travancore State Edited Velu Piliai, Trivandrum

26) 'Khan Saheb Chandai'

An old ballad containing only the text, 1929 - Edited with introduction reprinted by me and published by the Madurai University - 1972

27) For historical account of Khan Saheb, I am indebted to Orme's biography of Khan Saheb and Madurai Gazatteer 1919, Tirunelveli Gazetteer (H. R. Pate) and History of Tirunelveli District.

28) Caldwell

29) Sivagangai Kummi and Ammanai - (two ballads) Madras Government Oriental Manuscripts Series

30) For historical accounts - Madurai Gazetteer, Tirunelveli Gazetteer - Caldwell's History of Tirunelveli - Maruthu Iruvar - N. Sanjeevi

31) Culture and Civilisation of India - D. D. Kosambi - Published Routledge and Kegal Paul, London (1964), Myth and Reality - D. D. Kosambi

32) D. D. Kosambi - Popular Prakhasam, Bombay, 1962

Chapter Summary of 'Ballads of Suicide and Murder'

Tamil folklore is rich in literary creations describing gruesome murders and bizarre suicides. Folk-interest in such tragedies is understandable in the light of their own precarious economic plight, which is for ever on the verge of despair and hopelessness. Material and emotional conditions leading to murder or suicide come to be expressed in the literary genre called 'Kolai Chindu'. These kolai chindus have extensive anthropological significance.

In this chapter, a typical ballad of suicide 'Nallathangal' is analysed in depth. It is shown how this story of a hapless woman driven to suicide and murdering of her seven children is conditioned by the folk-environment, both cultural and historical. A comparison with cognate stories prevalent in Kerala and Andhra, serves to highlight the importance of the story.

Certain other ballads on murder published fairly recently in the wake of newspaper reports of sexually motivated, self-righteous and insensate murders have also been treated in this chapter. A diagrammatic comparison of the themes of these ballads is also given.

Finally, an example of an incipient type of ballads that may be called 'Industrial unrest songs' is also considered. Workers resorting to the ballad or song from, to express their dissatisfaction with the economic or social order, is fairly recent, but is full of potentialities for the future.

Ballads of suicide and murder

HEADINGS

1) Kolai Chindu : balladas of suicide aad murder
2) The Story of Nallathangal
3) Summary of the oral versions of Nallathangal
4) Historicity of the story: the origin (geographic) of the story
5) Circulation is differentt cultural milieu
6) Kannada Version

7) Folk-ethics and attitudes

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19) Sange Bale Gowda, a Kannada tale

20) Comparison of the four murder to stories

21) Conclusion

BALLADS OF SUICIDE AND MURDER

Kolai Chindu

Suicide and murder still inspire folk-poets to sing ballads, known as 'Kolai chindu' mainly in northern Tamil Nadu comprising South Arcot, North Arcot, Dharmapuri, Chingleput and Madras Districts. Senstational murders and suicides evoke scores of ballads, their popularity depending on the universal chords of human sensibilities they touch. The ballads are printed, learned by heart and sung to the folks. These songs in folk musical forms are sung by professional folk-singers, beggars in bus stands and railway stations in towns and weekly fairs and markets in villages.

Story of Nallathangal

The Popularity of the songs can be attributed to the social significance of the songs and criticism of social injustice, that makes life impossible for persons taking their own life, or impels a man to kill his fellow-beings. Normally the murderer is not a misanthropic maniac. Historically, the earliest of this type of ballad seems to be the story of Nallathangal, literally, "good sister," who is said to have killed her seven children and taken her life, unable to bear the insulting treatment of her brother's wife while she went to visit her brother's home at a time of distress during days of famine and drought in her own village.

Ballads and tales of the same theme are extant in Kammam District in Andhra, Dharwar District and Mysore region in Karnataka. The main theme is similar in all regional versions and differences are found only in non-essential details

Systematic collection of ballads remaining task of the future I can only narrate a few versions I have myself collected, and attempt a study of them.

Summary of oral versions of Nallathangal

Nallathangal is a very widely known story in Tamil Nadu through prose narratives, folk-plays and a ballad. The incidents are believed to have taken place in two villages in Watrap Taluk (Vathirayiruppu) in the western part of Ramnad District about 300 years ago after the Kammavar Naidus immigrated from Andhra and settled down there.

The story narrated in oral versions is as follows. Nallannan and Nallathangal, brother and sister, born in a wealthy land-owning family, worked on their family farm till Nallathangal was married to a rich peasant, who lived in a village a few miles away from her native village. She bore seven children. Then there was drought for twelve years in her village and the family began to be in want. Nallathangal's husband left the family in search of work. In the mean-time Nallathangal went to her parental home with her children to spend a few days and obtain from her brother a few bags of grain to tide over the critical days. When she arrived at her brother's house, she found that her brother was not at home, having gone to the field to work. Her sister-in-law treated her as an unwanted guest. Disappointed in her expectations and broken-hearted at the agonising taunts of her sister-in-law, she left without meeting her brother. She then realised that she had no rights in the home of her birth, after her marriage, though she had contributed her labour to increase the wealth of her parents' farm. Her brother was the sole owner of the property of her father, and his wife, a woman quite a stranger to Nallathangal was now the mistress of the house. The property of her father will pass on to that woman's sons and not to Nallathangal's. She could not claim even two bags of grain in times of dire distress. Her husband

had disapproved of her visit to her brother's house with a request for help. His judgment had proved correct. On her way back to her own village, she threw the children into a well and threw herself down into it after them. The brother returned home and learned about Nallathangal's visit from the neighbours. Without entering his house, he went in search of her. He found her and her children dead. He brought out the corpses of Nallathangal and her children from the well. He cremated the corpses near the well.

He returned home deciding to wreak vengence not only upon his wife, but also upon her parents and relatives. The rest of the story narrates how Nallannan took revenge upon his wife is told in different versions.

One version narrates that her husband killed her with a sickle. Another version assigns a different punishment for her. Nallannan takes her to the funeral of his sister and her children. Nine pyres were lit and the ninth was reserved for her. She was pushed into the burning flames of the pyre by her husband. After wreaking revenge upon his wife, he stabbed himself.

A third version describes the punishment of the cruel wife in a different manner. Nallannan sent invitations to his wife's parents and relatives for the marriage of a son. They all arrived. He built a stone hall for entertaining them and when they were all assembled, he made the roof fall down by operating a secret machanism that disconnected all the rafters. Thus all the relatives of his wife were killed.

Historicity of the story

It is very probable that the main incidents of the story are historical facts. At Khansapuram near Watrap, Ramanathapuram District, there is a persistent local tradition that a well by the side of the road to Watrap was the same in to which Nallathangal threw her children and herself. There are eight stones erected near the well to represent Nallathangal and her children. Passers by take a stone and drop it in front of the stones in representation of the soul of Nallathangal and her children. This is a traditional

form of either salute or insult to a spirit, good or evil. This practice of dropping a stone before a symbolic representation of a spirit is prevalent in many parts of Tirunelveli District. The place, believed to be the site of execution of Kattabomman, was marked by a huge mound, made up of stones dropped by passers-by, till it was removed a few years ago.

On the road from Onamakulam to Kadambur, there is a spot where people drop stones to remember the spirit of a rich Naicker who was murdered by his enemies, when he was returning from Kadambur to his village at night. The murder took place recently.

This ritual of dropping stones is only a recognition of the tragic death of a person, the folks admire or hate. Nowhere is Nallathangal deified and worshipped. Folk-attitude therefore towards her is that she was a human being. These circumstances point to the historicity of the events and characters of the story.

Place of origin of the story

Did the story originate at Khansapuram in Watrap Taluk or migrate from somewhere to Khansapuram, where it became popular ?

To solve this problem, we will have to consider what section of the folks or caste-groups believe that the characters belong to them. The Kammavars of Khansapuram and neighbouring areas claim that the characters were Kammavars and the incidents took place in Khansapuram itself and two villages near Khansapuram. They claim that their ancestors immigrated from Khammam, when a terrible famine drove them south, from their original homes in Kammam. They were completely cut off from their relatives in Khammam. There were no contacts or inter-marriages or mutual visits after their migration from Khammam and settlement in Watrap region.

The tradition can be verified by a cross reference to Khammam and looking for a version of the story similar to Nallathangal in Kammam region. I actually attempted to collect versions of this story in Hyderabad from folklorists. In 1964 I met

Dr. Narayana Krishna Kumari, resident in Hyderabad and told her the story of Nallathangal and enquired of her, whether such a story was known to the folks of Khammam. Not only did she reply in the affirmative, but also said that there was a ballad in Telugu containing the same story depicting the characters in the same manner, which she had collected from Khamam area in Andhra. Her collection data indicated that the ballad-singer came from Khammam and that the ballad was in circulation in Khammam area. The names of the characters and the place names are different. Neither the collector nor the singer knew about the existence of the story in Tamil Nadu.

Therefore it is most probable that the immigrants brougt the story from Khammam. There is no Telugu version of it circulating among Telugu speaking people in Watrap area. This story must have been composed as a ballad and sung there with local colouring a few decades after their settlement in Tamil Nadu.

The main thematic elements composing the story in Telugu version are the following.

1) The sister and brother were children of a farmer's family.

2) The sister was married to a farmer of wealthy circumstances.

3) He became poor due to failure of crops for many seasons.

4) He was separated from the family, when he left in search of money.

5) The heroine went to her brother's house in a neighbouring village to get grain. On denial of her request by her sister-in-law, She was overwhelmed with grief and shame. She threw her children into a well and threw herself after them.

6) Knowing what had happened, the brother chopped off his wife's head with a scythe. In the main particulars, the story agrees with the Tamil version. The similarity is due to the following reasons.

Circulation in different cultural milieu

1. The story migrated with the immigrants from its original home to the immigrant home. It did not pass on in translation to a group of folks who possessed a different culture and spoke a different language in the first stage.

2. The social structure was based on patrilinear inheritance of property both in Andhra and in Tamil Nadu.

3. The status of the unmarried and married woman was the same in both the places where the story originated and later immigrated.

4. Customes and cultural patterns did not change in the case of immigrants. They still preserve the stories of a number of chaste women and goddesses as narrated in Telugu. These goddesses are protectresses exclusively of their groups. But Nallathangal is neither a guardian spirit nor a Kula deity, but only the heroine with a character that attracted the admiration of both Telugu speaking and Tamil speaking folks.

Since the story spread to the whole of Tamil Nadu during centuries of its circulation, it has undergone changes relating to the social status of the characters, the customs of the group to which the characters belong and the cultural traits of the group. The product incorporating these changes is the modern ballad in Ammanai form, in which epic fragments such as Alli's marriage with Arjuna, Pavalakkodi's marriage with Arjuna are narrated.

Kannada version :

Now let us acquaint ourselves with the Kannada version of the story. The title of the Kannada ballad is Hannondhu Henagalu, literally meaning eleven corpses.

There lived a farmer who had eight children. His wife's brother lived in the same village. Due to drought and famine his family became poor. Being very rich, her brother was able to tide over the critical days of the drought with the money he had laid by for a rainy day. Having no provisions for the next day, the farmer went to town with the hope of borrowing a small sum of money

from a money-lender to buy grain and other necessities. He stayed in town for two days. There was nothing to cook and the children had to starve So the farmer's wife decided to go to her brother and borrow some grain. She went to her brother's house. The brother having gone to the fields to work, only his wife was to be found in the house. The farmer's wife made her request to her sister-in-law. The sister-in-law treated her like a beggar, abused her and pushed her out. The neighbours were silent witnesses to what happened. The farmer's wife returned home weeping all the way. On her way back, she went to a shop and bought rat poison in exchange for a small gold jewel. She told the enquiring shop keeper that she was buying it to get rid of rats in her house. She mixed it with food and her children. She also partook of the poisoned food. The news of the whole affair spread throughout the village. The husband returned to his house. Finding that his wife and children were dead, he stabbed himself. The brother returned and heard from the neighbours the story of his sister's visit to their house and behaviour of his wife towards her. He loaded a cart with grain, yoked a pair of bullocks and drove to his sister's house. She and her children being dead could no more eat food cooked out of the grain brougt by him. He stabbed himself and fell dead. So there lay in that house 11 corpses; 3 adults and eight children. So the story is entitled eleven corpses.

The motifs in this story differ essentially in 5 and 6. This is the method of meting out poetic justice. In the Tamil and Telugu versions the death of the heroine and her children is due to drowning, suicide and murder, while in the Kannada version, it is by poisoning, also suicide and murder. The fate of the brother in the Telugu version is left unsolved. The sister-in-law is punished by death, either by pushing into a burning pyre or by beheading with a weapon or by a falling roof. Only in one version, (Telugu folktale) she is treated leniently and is allowed to live after a change in character.

Folk-ethics and attitudes

The story is not merely a conglormeration of motifs of a wicked and selfish sister-in-law, it is also the action of a wife against the advice of her husband, leading to tragic consequences,

revenge for causing the death of a sister and her children. and so on. But these motifs are suitably manipulated to produce a single effect. It is criticism of the social system based on male superiority and patrilinear inheritance denying woman any share in the properties of her parents. *She could not claim any rights in her* father's wealth, which she had helped to increase.

Indian tales

Though Nallathangal had no claim over any income from her parents' property from her sister-in-law legally, and the refusal to help her is no offence against law, the folk-ethics and values expanded in folk-tales and ballads prescribe a generous and kind behaviour towards neighbours, relatives and even strangers. In folk-tales of the type "A helps a bird, animal and human being on his onward journey. He is rewarded by animal and bird on his *return journey. Man alone is ungrateful and is punished". This* is an ever recurrent theme in folk-tales all over the world. Tales of this type are found to occur in Katha Charit Sagar and Panchatantra. The following tale may serve as an *example to illustrate* what folk-narratives hold up as desirable behaviour.

A Brahmin finds a tiger, a cobra, a rat and a goldsmith in a well trying to get out. He lets down a bucket into the well and brings out the animals one by one. The animals advise the *Brahmin not to help the goldsmith, because the ungrateful wretch* would bring harm to his helper. But the man cries out aloud and appeals to the humanism of the Brahmin, who lets down the bucket and brings him out. *On his return journey,* the tiger presents him a crown, the snake a gem and the rat promises to come to his help when help was needed.

The Brahmin goes to the goldsmith to change the crown into cash. The crown of the king had been stolen and a reward has been announced for any one who recovers it and helps to apprehend the thief. The goldsmith decides to betray the man who had saved his life for a reward. He informs the king that he has found the thief with the crown in his possession, who orders to seize the crown and send the thief to the prison. The Brahmin is confined in a cave. He thinks of the animals which come to his help and get him released. With the help of the animals, the Brahmin becomes king. The goldsmith is ordered to be killed.

Russian Folk-tale

In a Russian folk-tale of the same type, a step-mother forces her husband to send his child to a forest covered with snow and let her die in the cold. The father leaves the child on a stone in teh snows. The child overturns the stone and finds an underground tunnel through which she walks. On her way she helps a tree, a bird and an animal and arrives at a house where a kindly fairy presents her with jewels and rich clothes and sends her back. On her return journey, the tree, the bird and the animal each gives her presents and sends her back. She goes back to her house, The greedy step-mother wants her own daughter to bring valuables just as her step-daughter has done and leaves her in the same place. The child enters the tunnel and walks along the same path. When the tree, bird and animal request her to help them, she refuses. When she arrives in the house of the fairy, she is turned back without presents. The tree, the bird and the animal throw tar on her, beat her and send her back naked.

Generosity and help to fellow-beings are rewarded and greed and selfishness are punished. The portrayal of two parellel and contradictory patterns of behaviour of two different characters, in numerous tales emphasise the same moral. The folks appreciate generous and kind behaviour. They disapprove greed and selfishness.

Universal folk-values

So much for folk-ethics which is universal. Here in this ballad, the negative character. the sister-in-law, who transgresses folk-ethics, should be punished, the punishment differing according to the seriousness of the crime as viewed by the folks of different regions. Except in one version, the folk-ballads have passed capital punishment on the offender. But in that version where a warning is administered, the cruelty and greed of the sister-in-law has not caused the death of the sister and children. So the folk-tribunal has let off the accused with only an admonition. Death sentence is not passed on her.

Puranicised version

The story is available as a printed ballad form. The change in form of narration necessitates changes in form and content. The area of Circulation of the epic ballad is known in the whole of Tamil Nadu. The oral form of the ballad, when it was written down was transformed into epic form. The authorship was assigned to a poet Pukalendi, who had become famous by his poem Nalavenba, (the story of Nala and Damayanti, an episode in Mahabharata and eulogistict poems on Pandyas. Many other ballads with Mahabharata episodes as themes were also assigned to him. Though he is considered a contemporary of Kambar and Ottakkoothan, who flourished in the twelfth century, the ballads which were written down from oral, versions were all fotisted on him. A close look at the epic ballad of Nallathangal and a comparison of its theme and its treatment with the oral versions, which narrate a simple peasant story, reveals the general laws of transformation of a simple folk-ballad into an elaborate folk-epic. The difference between a folk-ballad and a folk-epic is not merely in length, but in transmuting a simple folk-theme into an elevated theme using epic manner of narration and intermingling epic formulae with folk-formulae throughout the narration. Still the folk-epic perserves the kernel of the folk-theme.

I shall summarise the folk-epic Nallathangal Ammanai.

Before the beginning of the story, the folk-poet sings invocatory songs to Induvani, Isvari, Vinayaka, Sivasubramania and Saraswathi, following the epic manner of Indian and Greek epic poets.

Then the country and the city where the parents of the hero and heroines were living is described just at Kosala and Ayodya in Ramayana are described by Valmiki, Kambar, Molla or Ezhuthachan. I shall summarise the ballad, preserving the order of events, points of modification of the story in the oral versions and also the kernel of the story of the oral versions.

1. Lines 1-25

The country of the heroine is described as a very fertile land of Marutham, where paddy, cane and jack fruit grew. The peasants living in the country worked in paddy fields.

2. Lines 25-46

The capital of the country was Madurai. It was a city where Brahmins, warriors traders and artisans lived[2]. The city of the ballads has close resemblance to the city of Chilappatikaram.

3. Lines 46 - 99

The king of the country was Ramalingam and the queen Induvni.[3] They performed tapas to Siva praying for children. Siva appeared before them and granted them the boon they had prayed for; a boy and a girl born in succession, who were named Nallathambi[4] and Nallathangal. Their childhood and school life are briefly described.

4. Lines 99 - 120

Nallathambi married and inherited his father's property after his father's death. Nallathambi married his sister to the King of Kasi.[5]

5. Lines 121 - 172

Nallathambi bestowed on his sister, gardens, fields, jewels, herds of cows, utensils in gold, clothes and many other worldly goods as her streedhana. Curiously the list included brooms, harvesting implements winnowing shields and pounding sticks.[7]

6. 173 - 214

She left for her new home, where she gave birth to seven children. Famine visited the land which lasted for twelve years. The lines describe the horrors of famine. Nallathangal too was the victim of the famine. She had to sell all her belongings and was reduced to the state of a pauper. She had no food grains to cook even gruel to feed her children. She suggested to her husband that she would go to her brother to bring a small quantity of provisons to tide over the days of famine. The husband opposed her suggestion and advised her not to go to rich relatives when they were in want. They should as well work as wage-labourers carrying firewood or doing any kind of manual labour. On her insistent request, he permitted her to go to her brother's house, warning her that if any harm befell on his children, he would kill her.

7. Lines 301 - 348

On her way to Madurai, she experienced evil omens; a virgin walking along with a pot of burning firewood, a washerman crossing her with washed clothes and a snake crossing the road.[8] In spite of them, she continued her journey. She is said to have walked the distance from Kasi to Madurai followed by her children[8].

8. Lines 349-509

Her brother met her in a forest where he had come for a hunt. He sent her to his house, promising to return after sunset bringing version for her. She tells him that she could not find her way and identify his house, since it was nineteen years since she had left the place and never visited the place after her marriage. The brother sents her to his house giving her guidance about the route to follow and his address. She arrived at his house with her children.[9]

9. Lines 510 - 545

The sister-in-law Mooli Alankari learnt about the arrival of Nallathangal from her maids who had seen her coming along the street. She ordered her maid to close the door and plug the creeks with damp-earth. Arriving at the door, Nallathangal knocked at the door. There being no response to her knocks, she hurled a curse which made the door open by itself.[10]

Nallathangal told Alankari the tale of her woe which mades her realise that her sister-in-law had come with the intention of obtaining grain and money from her husband. She complained that they were also in want and had in their barns only 'keelvaraku' (raggee) that was harvested twelve years ago, thus making plain to Nallathangal that she was unwilling to part with anything to help her in her distress. She took a cracked earthen pot, poured water and dropped into it rotten Kambu grains stored in the barn for twelve years. She used as firewood green plantain stems which gave out a lot of smoke without burning. Nallathangal was very much grieved at the cold welcome she received in that house. Using her magical powers, she made the green plaintain stemsto

catch fire. While cooking, Alankari let out a flood of abuse at her sister-in-law, who unable to bear the insult, left with her children without saying good-bye to her sister-in-law. The neighbours, who knew how she was treated by Alankari, invited her to their houses for a meal; but she declined their invitation and went on her way.

10. Lines 687 - 823

As she went away, she marked her track with branches of avara plants and konrai flowers.[12] Leaving the town, she reached the pasture ground and enquired of cowherd boys where she could find a well with water to quench the thirst of her children. They pointed to a well towards which she led her children. She removed her tali and left it on a leaf plucked from a tree and wished that it should change into a rock. It turned miraculosly into a rock. She left her jewels and her clothes near the rock. She then picked up the children one by one and threw herself into the well after them. As she was throwing the children into the well, her brother experienced bad omens. Tremors passed on his shoulders; his elephant suddenly fell down and died[13].

11. Lines 824 - 1063

He returned home expecting sad news, for he had forebodings of evil, His wife welcomed him with unusual zeal and told him, a false story of how she had entertained Nallathangal and her children cooking special food for them to eat. Not finding her and her children in the house, he asked her where they were. Alankari told him a lie to cover up her wickedness. She told him that when she had gone to the well to fetch water, she had left without telling her.[15] Her statement aroused his suspicion. He went out in search of her. The neigbours related to him how his wife had treated his sister and how she had left with her children without taking leave of her sister-in-law. Nallathambi followed the track of avara branches and konrai flowers that led him to the well. Near the well he saw a rock and on it her ornaments and clothes. He was shocked when the whole story dawned on him. He peeped into the well and found the corpses in the well Jumping into the well, he brought out the eight corpses. He arranged to cremate the corpses and returned home. His grief, for the death of his sister and her

children in such tragic circumstances, was only equal to his enormous vengence upon his wife. whose selfishness, inhumanity and wickedness caused the death of his sister and her children. He wanted to take revenge by means of a stratagem and expose her wicked crimes.[14] He did not reveal to her what had happened to his sister and her children.

12. Lines 1064-1413

Nallathambi informed Alankari that he had decided to celebrate the marriage of his son in a short time and began preparations for its celebration. Nallathambi caused a pandal to be constructed to receive his relatives and entertain them. It was thatched with coconut palm leaves and adorned with flower garlands and bunches of fruits and arecanuts. Another building was erected with stones which would fall if a push button was pressed. It was for the use of his wife's relatives.

He sent out two sets of invitations, one for marriage of his son and the other for the funeral of his sister. The former was sent to his wife's ralatives and the latter to his own relatives. After the marriage rituals were over, the guests sat down to the wedding feast. As prearranged, Nallathambi's relatives gathered in the thatched pandal and Alankari's relatives sat in the stone building. As they were eating, the mechanic pressed the button causing the stone ceiling to fall down upon the guests. Under the stones they were all crushed to a man. The bride and bridegroom escaped, because the father of the bridegroom had asked them to eat with his relatives. He sought his wife and told her that he had wreaked vengence for the death of his sister. Alankari was thrown into a hot limekiln.

Rain fell. Kasi Raja's land yielded plenty of grain. It is described as, "Times became better and Kambu was harvested.[16] Desiring to take his wife back to Kasi, Kasi Raja journeyed to Madurai. He arrived in Madurai and met his brother-in-law and enquired where his wife and children were. Nallathambi narrated the story of Nallathangal from the time she arrived in Madurai, Stricken with grief, he planted his sword on the earth, fell up on it and died. Nallathambi also took his life in the same manner.

Taking pity upon the good men, women and children who had met with death, Siva and Parvathy appeared and revived all the ten persons who had died. Nallathangal requested her brother to make a stone effigy of her sister-in-law and instal it in some place where all persons passing by would throw curses upon her. She desired him to build a temple for her.

Nallathangal and her children were turned to Vanni trees. Nallathambi and Kasi Raja went to Kailas.

IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF MODIFICATION

ORAL TAMIL VERSIONS	BALLAD VERSION
Nallathangal and Nallannan were born in a farmer's family.	Their parents were king and queen of Madurai. They were born in answer to tapas to Siva.
They worked on their farm while they were young.	Being a prince and princess, they were brought up in a royal house-hold with many servants to attend on them.
They had to work in their dry lands and gardens raising dry crops and tending their orchards.	The country in which they were born, abounded in fertile fields and gardens.
Nallathangal was married to a farmer's son in a neighbouring village. She could walk to her native village with her children.	Nallathangal was married to the king of Kasi. It was separated from the place of her birth by thousands of miles.
There is no mention of streedhana bestowed on her at the time of her marriage.	Nallathangal was given lands, cows, jewels and utensils in gold as streedhana as befitting a princess married to a king. Curiously she was presented with tools for harvesting - a broom and a winnowing shield.

The reason for the impoverishment of Nallathangal's home is famine and drought for many years.	There was famine for twelve years. Nallathangal sold all her belongings including her streedhana. She became so poor that she had no grain to cook even gruel for her children
Nallathangal's proposal to visit her brother to get a bag of grain is not favourably looked upon by her husband. He suggests that they can earn wages as labourers cutting fire-wood or as farm-labourers.	Kasiraja opposes his wife's proposal to visit her brother saying that it was better to earn wages as labourer than to go begging to her brother.
7. Nallathangal's husband leaves the family to find work to earn his living (Tamil). He leaves for a town to borrow a sum of money (Kannada).	Kasi Raja accompanies Nallathangal for a little distance on her way to Madurai and then returns to Kasi. He makes no effort to get work and obtain money by borrowing.
8. Travelling through a forest, she arrives at her brother's house. She receives a cold welcome from her sister-in-law. The sister-in-law does not allow Nallathangal even to pick up fruits that had dropped to earth from the trees. She even refuses to give them water. She sulks and abuses Nallathangal.	Nallathangal meets her brother in the forest accidentally. He sent her to his house. Learning of her arrival, Alankari closes the door and plugs it with damp earth. Nallathangal curses the door to open. The treatment is the same here as described in the oral versions. She uses old rotten Kambu grain for preparing gruel. She uses green plantain stems as firewood. Nallathangal uses her magical power to make the damp stems to burst into flames. On these occasions she exhibits her magical powers born out of her charity.

ORAL TAMIL VERSIONS	BALLAD VERSION
9. Nallathangal leaves her brother's house with the intention of returning home. While on her return journey, she decides to kill the children and commit suicide. She throws the children into a well and jumps into it.	She marks the path of her journey with avara branches and konrai flowers so that her brother can trace her. She inquires of cowherd boys where she can find a well to quench the thirst of her children She perfoms a miracle, turning her tali into a rock. She leaves her jewels and clothes near the well and then throws the children into the well and jumps into it.
10. Nallannan returns home after his day's toil in the farm. He learns the news of her sister's visit and his wife's cold welcome to her from the neighbours. She asks his wife where Nallathangal had gone. He is unable to learn from her where his sister had gone. He makes enquiries and learns that she had gone in the direction of her village. He walks towards her village and finds the well in which she had thrown the children and herself. He brings out the corpses. He cremates the corpses and returns home determining to wreak vengence on his wife.	Nallathambi returns home. His wife tries to please him by telling him lies. But he learns from his neighbours the treatment meted out to his sister. He goes out in search of her. The avara branches and konrai flowers led him to the well. He notices the signs near the well pointing to the destination of her journey. He looks into the well and find the corpses He brings out the corpses and cremates them. He returns home determined to wreak vengeance upon his wife.
11. 'Different versions of punishment' 11 a. He brought his wife and pushed her into the burning pyre.	In the ballad punishment is meted out to his wife's relatives by recourse to a stratagem and to his wife by throwing her into a burning limekiln.

ORAL TAMIL VERSIONS	BALLAD VERSION
b. He killed his wife with a scythe.	
c. He invited her relatives and killed them by recourse to a stratage and threw into his wife a burning limekiln.	
d. As Nallathangal had returned home, he deceived his wife telling her about a fire accident that had burned down her parents' house and took grains and other articles in seven carts promising to deliver them to her parents. But he delivered them to his sister. On returning she tells her a story that on the way doves had flown away with the bags of grain. She realises her guilt.	
12. The story ends with the suicide of Nallannan.	The story does not end abruptly with the cremation of the 8 bodies. Kasi Raja comes in search of his wife and children. Famine has disappeared and the country has been made fertile. The fertile lands yield kambu grains in abundance. Reservation and transforma tion.

Folk-elements modified

Let us see how the folk-elements are modified in the ballad to suit the epic form of narration.

Social status of characters

1) The first four parts which describe the childhood of the chief characters Nallannan and Nallathangal are not described at length in the oral versions of the story. They are born and brought up in a peasant family where they participate in farm labour to help their parents. The father is just a prosperous farmer who himself works on his farm.

Royal status

The ballad follows the epics in describing the country and the town in which the characters are born. Then an epic formula is introduceed. The king of Madurai, Ramalingam and his queen Induvani have no child for many years after their marriage. They perform tapas to Siva and Parvathi. The great god and his consort appear in the dream or in their conscious state and grant the queen the boon *of bearing children.* Then a boy was born and later a girl. Being prince and princess, they are tutored by learned teachers. The king and the queen die one after another. Nallathambi is married while his father is alive but Nallathangal is married to Kasi Raja after the death of her father. Then another formula is introduced, a description of the dowry the bride brought home to her husband.

Purpose of modification

The modification has the purpose of presenting the characters in the light of puranic heroes and heroines. Here the narration *follows both epics and folk-epics.* The formulae are quite effective in bringing about the transformation in the status of the characters. They are promoted from the status of their birth, a working peasant's family to that of a royal household. This is done to heighten the interest of the listeners by showing that reduced to a queen, bestowed with a rich dowry when she married is circumstance that there is no food grain to feed her children. That is very strange. Here the disguise of the royal status falls off; and the woman appears in her natural being consciousness. The advice of her husband to her, not to visit her brother while they are poor and needy, as they can as well work for wages by cutting down trees for firewood or prepare dung cakes for fuel or pound *corn for wages, very well*

strengthen the view that the royal status of the characters is only a disguise. How can a king and queen become so poor as to think of earning their keep by manual labour ? The modification of the peasant characters is most ludicrous and inconsistent with their inner being. The modification of the *peasant status into royal* status does not transform the peasant folk-character and the material and spiritual life of the hero and herione of the story:

The main axis around which the whole story revolves is the visit of Nallathangal to her brother's house and the *callous and in-*sulting treatment she receives from Alankari, her sister-in-law. The oral version does not mention the accidental meeting of the brother and sister in the forest, when Nallathangal is on her way to his house. They are brought together in the forest, when she is pass-*ing through it* and her brother is brought there on the pretext of a hunting expedition. The device is introduced, just to show that the brother is very affectionate towards her and desires to help her. The wife's nature will then be brought out more affectively, because her husband's character will serve as a foil. The melodramatic device of the meeting will arouse the sentiments of the listener and the audience and attune them to disapprove the behaviour of his wife. It may also be to justify the punishment the husband inflicts on his wife, because the meeting gives him evi-*dence that his sister intended to visit their house and her disappea-*rance could have been caused only by the insult she received from her sister-in-law. He could then not have acted upon the strength of hearsay evidence from his neighbours.

The meeting between the sisters-in-law is the immediate cause for the tragedy. The oral version describes the tragedy, briefly bringing out the greed and selfishness of Alankari. She is miserly; she would not part with even a mango or a measure of rice for her husband's closest relatives. Touched to the quick, Nallathangal leaves the house lamenting over her fate. The *ballad* version is more descriptive, and narrates the incidents with more details, that the aesthetic effect is the picture of a monstrous inhuman creature of a sister-in-law.

Epic magnification

The epic characters are not realistic—portrayals of paragons of virtue or monsters of wicknedness. A certain cluster of virtuous

or wicked traits is represented in a character using hyperbolic ar i-fices. The folk-poet also employs the artistic methods of the epic poet. Still the folk-character and attitudes of the character form the foundation upon which the magnification of the edifice is achieved.

How magnification is achieved

How is epic magnification achieved in the ballad of the character of Alankari and Nallathangal ? Let us have a look at the method of giving a demonish colour to Alankari. The column lists what she does when Nallathangal arrives and stays in her house. Alankari closes the door and plugs the creeks with damp earth. This is just closing the door upon the visitor to indicate that she is unwelcome. It is even now a folk-custom in certain villages in Koilpatti Taluk and Watrap Taluk to plug the creeks and the inter-spaces between the door and the frame with cowdung to show that the owners of the house have left the house for a few days to visit relatives.[16] It is expected that nobody knocks at the door while the door is thus plugged. Alankari does not want Nallathangal even to knock at the door, but wishes that she will turn away seeing the door closed and plugged. Nallathangal know that her sister-in-law is in, because she has met her brother who had asked her to go to his house. Closing the door upon the face of the visitor is a crime against folk-rules of hospitality. You should not close the door even upon a troublesome beggar. Nallathangal knocks insistently. Receiving no repsonse, she employs the magic powers of her chastity. She curses the door, and it is thrown open. It is here that Nallathangal is shown to be in possession of supernatural powers for the first time.

Nallathangal enters the house with her children and narrates her tale of sorrow and suffering to her sister-in-law. Alankari is most displeased at her visit and request for help. She relates a false story of woe, saying that they have no grain even for the use of their family for the period before the next harvest, which will bring in grain. She says that they have in store in the granaries only kelvaragu grains harvested twelve years ago.

Purpose of miracles

She begins cooking the rotten grain in a cracked pot. Her duplicity and miserliness are emphasised in the ballad by her action of trying to light a fire with green plantain stems. Nallathangal wanted to defeat her tricks a second time. She employs her magic powers again pronouncing the words, "If I am a chaste woman, let the fire burn". Just in the tradition of Kannaki, who burnt Madurai throwing of her breast severed by her nails, Nallathangal lit a fire by a mere wish.

Enhancement of the character of Nallathangal as a chaste woman

The details of closing and plugging the door by Alankari is meant to depict her as a more monstrous creature than what she has been portrayed in the oral story. That will serve the purpose of artistic exaggerated portrayal of villainous character. The two details of supernatural happening are intended to draw our attention to the character of Nallathangal as a chaste woman, whom we know from epic tradition modified by folk tradition, that she has powers over nature. Here the poet is indebted to the folk-version of the story of Kannaki, known as Kovalan Kathai, and also to other stories of chaste women who are said to have exorcised magical power over forces of nature. Pathini worship is practised in the domestic ceremonies of 'Mangalya Pendukal' in which married women who had predeceased their husbands are worshipped by women in their families. We have here an enhancement of the character of Nallathangal from that of a good sister and wife to that of a worshipful chaste woman of epic tradition.

The meeting between the husband and the wife after his return home is handled differently by the oral versions and the ballad version. In the oral versions, Nallannan, the brother of Nallathangal, has not met his sister before her arrival at his house, nor does he know about her visit to his house because he has not met her in the forest on her way to his village as the epic ballad version has it. He learns about her visit from his neighbours, only after Nallathangal has left his house. In the ballad version he knows about her visit and is surprised not to find her in his house.

He could have guessed what might have happened. So he does not believe a word of what his wife tells him about his sister's visit. Because of his foreknowledge of his sister's visit, he could see through the falsity of his wife's story. He did not believe her statement that Nallathangal had left without taking leave, while she was absent from the house to fetch water.

Her excuse for having been absent to bring water from a well is a betrayal of the real status of Nallannan's family. If she were a queen, why should she go herself to carry water to the house ? Again she cooks food, which she need not trouble about if she were a queen. Was there not a maid to cook food and bring water ? Was there no source of water supply in the palace ? The real peasant status of the characters of the original versions of the story is reinstated by the description of the queen cooking food and carrying water.

Methods of nemesis

Now we come to the final stage of the theme of the story- Nallannan going in search of his sister, finding the corpses in the well, the cremation of the bodies and the nemesis.

The two versions agree in the description of the search, discovery of the corpses and the cremation, except that in the printed ballad version Nallannan follows the track of avarai branches and konrai flowers purposefully left on her route by Nallathangal.

The significance of avarai must be noted. It has a totemic significance for the Telugu-speaking Kammavar folks. Before the marriage of the eldest daughter of a family, certain rituals are performed, in which avarai plant is worshipped. A garland is placed on an avarai plant and a cock is sacrificed before it by the bride's family. The avarai is believed to be a female deity, endowed with the power of protecting daughters of a family. So before a daughter is married, her protection is craved for by the parents, in her new home. It is significant that Nallathangal throws on her way uprooted avarai plants or their branches to remind her brother, the only representative of her parental family about the protection

he has to give her. This also confirms the theory that Nallathangal belonged to the Kammavar caste, who are mostly peasants in Watrap region.

I am not able to suggest any significance for konrai flowers, as I have no knowledge of any totemic relation between konrai and the Kammavars. But it is similar in appearance and colour to avarai and is sacred to Siva.

In the ballad version, Nallathangal leaves her thali by the side of the well and magically turns it into a rock. When a married woman dies, she must leave her thali to her husband. It is removed and handed over to her husband. No one else has a right to receive it. It is defiled, if it is touched by strangers. It should not fall into the hands of strangers. So she transforms it into a rock, which no one could remove. She places all other jewels, and clothes near the well without caring who would take possession of them.

The bringing out of the corpses and the cremation are incidents that are described in an identical manner both in oral and ballad versions, The avarai plants and the corpses cry out for revenge. The method of avenging the death of his sister, whose protector he should have been, now decides to revenge her death. Nallannan finds his wife guilty of murder and responsible for his failure to protect her.

There is an immediate response to this decision in his behaviour in the versions in which he kills her with a sickle. The Kammavars are sentimental folks and till very recently behaved just in the manner of Nallannan in similar circumstances. It is the most realistic conclusion of the story.

Another version has it, that he dragged her to the burning ground and pushed her into a burning pyre that was made for her.

Death inflicted by a weapon or by fire is a normal punishment, for murder prescribed by Manu's code and later codes of law (Manu Dharma Sastra).

Revenge is achieved by means of a stratagem of making the roof fall upon the victims, Alankari's relatives were killed in that manner.

Significance of punishment

Alankari was thrown into a burning limekiln. This is no legal execution; since she caused the death of eight lives by her cruelty, miserliness, wickedness and duplicity, she must be punished in an examplary manner. Further she had treated her relatives as honoured guests, while she had turned away her sister-in-law with insults and abuses. Her transgression of the unwritten code of hospitality and charity to husband's relatives had been the indirect cause for the murder of seven children and suicide of their mother. Though Nallathangal had committed the actual murder and suicide, Alankari's offences against folk-ethical conduct were responsible for her actions.

Transgression of folk-ethics and punishment for it

Therefore it will not meet the ends of justice to pass sentence of death only on her. Those who profited by her generosity and those who did not disapprove of her behaviour should also be punished. So the folk-poets thought of a stratagem to kill all the relatives of Alankari. They are killed by making the roof fall; and she is killed by being thrown into a limekiln.

These two forms of execution are quite familiar in folk narratives. The whole family of a Kurava king who became rich by learning by chance a method to transmute iron into gold and who desired marriage with a Mudali family was killed in the same manner described in this ballad, by causing the roof fall on his relatives, who had gathered for amarriage function. Faithless and immoral wives of kings and nobles were killed by being thrown into lime kilns. Though Alankari was not immoral or faithless in the ordinary sense, she had not helped her husband in his duty of giving protection to his sister, and actually caused the death of a chaste woman. Thus the punishment meted out to unchaste and faithless wives in law codes is inflicted on her.

Pardon for Alankari in one version

There is only one version in which the heroine returns home grief stricken and ashamed after being treated insultingly and refused help by her sister-in-law. The brother returns home and learns

what happened, while he had been absent. On his way home, he meets his sister walking back home. He learns from her how she had been treated by his wife. He sends her to her house and walks home deciding to teach his wife a lesson. He tells her that he met a messenger from her father who told him that her father's house had been burnt down with all store of grain and all costly things. She grows sad and wants to send help. She requests her husband to carry bags of grain and a parcel of clothes and utensils to her father's house. He yokes bullocks to seven carts and loads them with bags of grain and other goods. He leaves home in the morning and returns walking before sunset. She asks where he had left the carts and the bullocks. He replies without hesitation that on the pigeons had carried them off. She retorts how could one believe the news; She had told his sister that there was no grain in the barns since it had been eaten away by ants. Having learned about this from his sister, he quips, "If ants could carry away all the grain and empty our barn, why could not pigeons carry off the carts with bullocks yoked to them". Then she understands that he had delivered all the goods she had sent to her parents to his sister and the news he conveyed was just made up to teach her a lesson. She learns a lesson and turns a new leaf in her life.

The above story is narrated in a Kannada folk-tale entitled "The Story of Nigama" (the name of the wife). The theme of the story is quite different from the story of Nallathangal of either of the ballad version or the oral versions. The theme has the motif, "wicked wife who treated her sister-in-law callously is reformed by the husband by means of a false-hood". In this story, the hub of the Nallathangal story, the motifs of murder and suicide and the revenge on the wife is absent.

Epic ending - The after life of characters

Let us now revert to the Nallathangal stoty as related by the ballad. The ballad concludes with a supernatural incident. Siva and Parvathy are moved to pity by the death of seven children and the suicide of Nallathangal, her brother and husband. They arrived on the spot, where deaths occurred and revived all the dead souls. Nallathangal says that if the dead come back to life, it will bring harm

to the world. So she desires to be turned into a Vanni sapling. A temple should be built for her. An effigy of her sister-in-law should be installed and people passing before it should express their disapproval of her conduct. Her brother and his brother-in-law are blessed with life in Kailas.

Epic transformation not successful

This supernatural revival of all the dead and the future fate chartered out for each by God is in imitation of mythological ballads like Mariamman Kathai, Neelikathai the cycle of Madan Kathai in which the heroes are killed, revived and allowed to continue their life as spirits or deites worshipped by the folks. But despite the wish expressed by Nallathangal, there is no temple or cult for her in any part of Tamil Nadu. Though there is a stone representation of Nallathangal and her children near Manur in Tirunelveli District, they are neither believed to be deities nor do they receive periodical worship or sacrifices. Therefore the story of Nallathangal still remains the story of human beings, who lived in this world and lived a human life. The supernatural revival of the dead is only a mythological formula in the manner of mythological ballads telling the stories of folk-heroes, who were later deified. The mere addition of a supernatural formula will not transform a social into a mythical ballad.

Why no version of the story in Kerala

It is interesting that no story of the type of Nallathangal is found in the folklore of Kerala. The story of Kadankot Makkom is pointed out to have close similarities with the story of Nallathangal by Dr. D. K. K. N. Kurup. I shall narrate the story, so that it may be compared with the story of Nallathangal, to see if the similarities are so fundamental that it can be considered a Malayalam version of Nallathangal.

The story deals with the tragic and of Makkom,[17] a woman of Nambiar caste of Kadankot family of Kunhimangalom, near Payyannur. She was the only sister of twelve brothers and was therefore much beloved of them. Her sister-in-law were jealous of her and were waiting for a chance to turn the affection of their husbands towards her into hatred. The husbands had gone to fight as

mercenaries for Kolathiri a king. One evening Emman, the oilmonger came to give oil to their house. Makkom, being in her monthly periods and not seeing her sisters-in-law about the house, asked him to place the oil-jar in her room. Emman did as he was told. The sisters-in-law saw in this incident an excuse to blacken Makkom's reputation of chastity. When the warriors returned, their wives told them a concocted story of love-affair between their sister and Emmon. Believing the story, the brothers decided to wipe off the blot to the honour of the family by killing their sister. They took her with her children on the pretext of visiting a temple. Suspecting no harm, she followed them after offering a prayer to Ellatath Bagavathy of her native village. On the way she got milk from a Nayar house at Chalavoyal. Continuing their journey they arrived at place where there was a mosque called Achankara and and a well inside its compound. Her children being thirsty, she took them to the well to draw water for them to drink. After the children had drunk water, one of the brothers shouted, "How wonderful there is a star shining in the sky at midday". As she looked up expecting to see the star in the sky, one of the brothers cut off her head with his sword and two other brothers killed her children too. The brothers returned to their village convinced that they had saved the honour of the family by the murder of their sister and her children. While returning, they began to find fault with one another for being the cause of the murder of their beloved sister without any enquiry about the truth of their wives, statements. They fought with one another and killed themselves.

Makkom and her children were deified and worshipped by the people of the locality as Makkom Bagavathi.

Kurup's comment

K. K. N. Kurup comments upon the story saying that, "One Tamil ballad Nallathangal has a close resemblance to the story of Makkom. Nallathangal is the tragic story of a woman who threw her seven children into a well and committed suicide, being unable to bear the in iquities heaped upon her by her sister-in-law"

Kurup however does not fail to notice the dissimilarities. "But her suicide was caused by property affairs. In the case of

Makkom, it was a case of chastity. In the story of Nallathangal, her brother Nallannan, took revenge on his wife and her parents by means of a stratagem and killed himself".

Even after noting the differences between the themes of the two stories, he believes that the stories bear close resemblance to each other. The differences are not merely those of suicide and murder, the cause for death being "property affairs" and "question of chastity". The difference is so fundamental that the two stories have to be classified as being examples of two different types of folk-ballads. The differences relate to the basic difference in social structure and the status of a sister in the brother's family and the laws of inheritance in the two regions, Central Kerala and Southern Tamil Nadu.

Makkom and Nallathangal two different types

A sister in Kerala, by virtue of the matrilinear system of inheritance and matriarchal athiliations and matrilocal residence after marriage has a higher status in the family than wives. There is a confusion in the story about the residence of the wives, who are said to live in their husband's home. Anyhow their rank in the former hierarchy was lower than that of the sister. So there is no question of the sister going to beg her sister-in-law for help. It is merely jealousy that prompts them to cause harm to her good name. A sister's chastity is a point of honour to the warrior-castes of Kerala. So the sisters-in-law pick up the question of chastity of the sister and fabricate a story of her immoral relation with a man of a low-caste. The brothers being easily incitable warriors, prizing the honour of their family higher their own lives, decide to remove the blot to that honour by liquidating their sister and her children, their own heirs according to the laws of matrilinear succession. They commit the most serious crime against social laws. Poetic justice is meted out to them by a quarrel among themselves, in which they kill one another. The position of Nallathangal in her brothers' home is quite different. I have pointed out to the social position of a sister and her status in her brother's family. She has only a right for a dowry and no more. That having been given her at the time of her marriage, she has no claim on any income of the parental property. Her brother, his wife and their children were

the heirs to the property of her father. But folk code of behaviour would require the brother and sister-in-law to be generous, kind and helpful to her. The sister-in-law did not offend any civil laws, but she did offend against the code values of the folks. There will be no punishment for her through the process of law but the supreme judges of folk-lore will not let her go unpunished. Nallathangal did not claim anything as a matter of right, but only tried to appeal to her sister-in-law's sympathy. Having been thwarted in her efforts to obtain help from her sister-in-law, she dicides to end her life and kill her children. The brother of Nallathangal, who according to the folk codes of ethics should protect her, avenges her death by killing his wife.

The points of difference in the two themes is listed below to indicate that the differences are very flagrant.

	Makkom	Nallathangal
1.	'Social class'	
	Nambiar woman—brothers, professional warriors.	Peasant woman—brother and husband peasants
2.	'Form of inheritance'	
	Nair—Matrilineal	Kammavar—Patrilineal
3.	'Residence'	
	Matrilineal	Patrilocal
4.	'Cause for murder'	
	Jealousy of sisters-in-law	Wickedness and miserliness of sister-in-law.
5.	'The attitude of the brothers'	
	The affection of the brothers turns to hatred, on hearing the false story of immoral behaviour of their sister. Warrior's reputation is sullied by the slander of immorality of sister.	Brother always sympathetic and loving to sister, Justifies the name Nallannan by his behaviour — The question of morality of the sister is not brought up.

	Makkom	Nallathangal
6.	To save the honour of the family, the brothers murder their sister.	The brother avenges the death of his sister by killing his wife.
7.	The sisters-in-law achieve their purpose of getting rid of Makkom.	The sister-in-law is punished with death for offending the folk-code of conduct expected of a brother's wife.
8.	'Deification'	
	Makkom has been deified and worshipped by the community to which she belonged. She is identified with Baghavati and distinguished as Kadankot Makkom Bagavathi.	Nallathangal was not deified. She is believed to have been a human being, though in the printed story she asks her brother to build a temple for her. No temple exists for her worship. The stones at Khansapuram and Manur are only commemorative symbols.
9.	'Social milieu'	
	Makkom, sister in a matrilineal society where her sons will inherit brother's property -The children of the brother will have no right to their father's property.	Nallathangal, sister in a patrilineal society. Her children had no right for her mother's father's property. Her brother's sons will inherit the property.

There are essential points or difference between the two accounts of the death of a sister in the Makkom story and Nallathangal story. The characters of the brothers are conditoned by their respective social and cultural environments and folk attitudes. They have different types of themes, the differences being essential and similarities, unessential.

Kolai chindu ballads

'Murder and suicide ballads'

We are now in a position to classify and examine ballads called 'Kolai chindu' [18] which are a living tradition in the northern districts of Tamil Nadu. Whenever a sensational murder is reported in the news-papers, folk-poets are inspired to compose ballads, print them and circulate them. Many folk-singers learn them and sing them to groups of audiences on different occasions. In Dharmapuri District, paid mourners who sing dirges at funeral sing Kolai chindu songs also.

Not news reports, but artistic creation

These songs are real folk-ballads and not mere news reports of murder and suicide. The reports are artistically woven into ballads in folk-tunes. They are artistic folk literary creations absorbing within them folk-attitudes and sensibilities. All the ballads contain social analysis of the incidents of murder and suicide. They go beyond the legal limits of the definition of crime and analyse the causes for the events and trace their social conflict.

Two types — Makkom and Nallathangal

Two types of ballads are most common. One is based on conflict with norms of sexual behaviour and the other on the conflict between love for the members of the family and inability to feed them, because of poverty caused by famine or loss in business ventures (economic). The first may be called Makkom type and the second Nallathangal type. Murder with the intention of theft or decoity rarely inspires the folk muse. Only socially significant killings, for instance recent firing by the police on workers and peasants, have inspried folk-poets to compose Kolai Chindu on labour strikes and mass agitations, in which a few agitato:s get killed by the police bullets.

The Makkom type will include ballads in which, conflict caused by unapproved sexual relations or even suspicion of such behaviour will be responsible for murder or suicide. The Nallathangal type, includes all ballads where killing can be attributed to crisis in life caused by change in economic status of the characters of the story.

Unless tragic heights are reached in lives of the characters leading to killing on suicide, the folk-poet is not inspired. Accidental death by drowning, train or bus accident rarely evoke any song among the folks. There are one or two songs on dacoity and murder. Generally human tragedy inspires the folk-poet to sing a ballad.

I shall discuss the themes of three ballads, Siddhaiyan Kolai Chindhu, Goundan Kolai, and Mangammal Kolai, all of the Makkom type.

"Siddhaiyan Kolai, the murder commited by Sidhaiyan has the widest circulation of all the four ballads. The name of the author is mentioned as Thirumalaiswamy. It was composed and printed in 1969.

Story of Siddhaiyan

Kanniappa Mudaliar of Kandapaiayam had a only son who was named Siddhaiyan. He was married to a beautiful woman named Balammal. For a few months the couple lived happy in Siddhaiyan's father's house. Siddhaiyan desired to visit Mysore to see the celebration of Dasara in the month of Aippasi with the promise to return as soon as the Dasara was over. When he left home he experienced evil omens which foreboded nothing good. Eight days after he left, his wife received a letter from him advising her to take care of herself and expressing his love and greetings to her. The day before she received the letter, her father-in-law made overtures to her and tried to entice her to go to bed with him. She rejected his advances with firm determination. She warded him off even when he threatened to stab her if she did not fulfil his wish. She asked to be sent to her parents the next day. The vily father-in-law changed his time and pretended that what he did was only a test of her chastity and that he did not really mean to embrace her.

Kanniappa Mudaliyar sent a telegram to his son, in which he accused Balammal with immoral conduct and asked him to return as soon as he received the telegram. Not being able to guess the truth, Siddhaiyan believed his father's message andr eturned post-

haste to Kandapalayam. On his way back to his village, he decided to kill her. On arriving home he told his wife that they should go to visit her father in Gurunathappalayam. She felt happy at the prospect of visiting her parents and spending a few days with them. He had planned to take her to a thick forest on the outskirts of Kandapalayam, chop off her head and bury her corpse there. She did not sleep well that night being disturbed by terrible dreams. The next morning Siddhaiyan and Balammal left home and walked along the road leading to the forest. He dragged her behind a thick cluster of forest trees and told her that her that he was going to kill her as a punishment for her immoral conduct. Balammal did not reveal her secret. She fell at his feet with out a word, thinking that if a woman died at the hands of her husband her soul would be blessed by Siva to enter Kailas. He severed her head from her body with a big knife, took it and returned home. He told his father what he had done. Kanniappa Mudaliar was terrified at the turn of events. He advised his son to escape to Nepal, lest he should be arrested, tried and hanged.

While Siddhaiyan slept that night, his wife appeared to him in his dream and told him what had happened during his absence in Mysore. He woke up determined to kill his father who had caused the death of his innocent wife. He took the same knife with which he had killed his wife, and cut off his father's head while he lay sleeping. He didn't want to live after he had killed his wife and father. He cut off his own head and fell dead. In the morning the neighbours entered the house and saw the corpses of the father and son with heads severed. They gave information to the police who came and after completing legal formalities buried the bodies. They found a letter written by Siddhaiyan in which he had confessed that it was he who murdered his wife and father. Desire for a married woman had caused three deaths.

Based on a News Item

The story is based upon a news item about a double murder committed by Siddhaiyan incited by the false report of immoral conduct of his faithful wife Balammal, who refused to submit herself to the desire of her father-in-law, who took revenge upon her.

The characters belong to the Mudaliar caste. They lived in Kandapalayam in Salem District.

What made the father-in-law desire sexual relation with his son's wife and think that was possible ? Was such a relation, permissive among the folks in the region ? The majority community of the region considered to be high in caste-ranking had such a customary permittance whereby the father-in-law could have sexual intimacy with his daughter-in-law.

This custom was disclosed in an article by J. D, in Indian Antiquary in 1874.[19]

Permissive relations between father-in-law and daughter-in-law among a particular community.

"The following custom which is prevalent among certain classes of Sudras, particularly the Vellalas of Coimbatore and neighbouring parts, seems to have no foundation in Vedic or Puranic texts, but must be attributed to ignorance and immorality. A father married a grown up girl 18 or 20 years old to his son seven or eight, after which he publicly lives with his daughter-in-law until the youth attains his majority, when his wife is made over to him, generally with half a dozen children. These children are taught to address him as their father. In general cases this woman becomes the common wife of the father and the son. She pays every respect due to her wedded husband and takes great care of him from the time of his marriage. The son in his turn hastens to celebrate the marriage of his acquired son six years old with the usual pomp, ceremonies and tamasha and keeps the bride himself, as his father had done. She will of course not less than 16 years old. His lawful wife is left under the guardianship of the father. When the course of time renders it necessary, he makes his son's wife over to him with a pretty good number of buckshish (children) not forgetting at the same time to initiate the eldest boy among them in the great traditionary rule. So on this practice is perpetuated from father to son, for generations. You will thus often find a man twenty years old having a son twelve years old.

One of the principal objects of infant marriages was to effect such disagreeable unions, to enable the parents and relations to

fulfil these long-cherished wished and monetary transactions, for children will not object, but rejoice to be married to a "mummy"

The prevalence of this custom in Salem Distrct among a high caste community is revealed in a folk-song. The collector of the song sent a note about this practice that existed 30 years ago and is still prevalent in remote villages. I shall quote part of the song containing the relevant information with my comments on it.

(Some one knocks at the door. The woman in the house sings a song expressing her inability to open the door.

"Milk pot is on the oven,
The baby boy lies in the cradle
The grandfather who birthed it
Is lying on the cot".[20]

My comment is based on personal investigation; and the note of explanation for the relevant passage was sent by the collector, who is himself a member of the community in which this custom prevails.

Lines 3 and 4 refer to the grandfather of the child as the man who caused the child's birth. These lines refer to a social custom prevalent among the Vellalas of Salem and Coimbatore Districts just two generations ago. The new bride had her father-in-law as her sex-partner. They would openly live together and go to attend marriages or ceremonies. There was no odium attached to the practice at least among the members of that caste-group. It was considered respectable for the daughter-in-law to live with her father-in-law and go visiting in his company. In that community, though the custom has almost disappeared, at present the hang over of the past is revealed in the custom of calling one's father Annan (elder brother) and grandfather as Appan (Father) In remote villages the old custom still continues.

Kanniappa did not belong to the permissive jati

Kanniappa Mudaliar and his son Siddhaiyan did not belong to the community that practises this custom. Siddhaiyan's wife

could not submit herself to the advances of her father-in-law. But the father-in-law wanted to introduce a relationship with his daughter-in-law which was quite normal and in-offensive among the folks of the community ranking highest in caste hierarchy. Monogamy and sexual relations with husband alone being the traditional rule in Kanniappan's caste, the conduct of the father-in-law led to a critical situation in the family-in law led to a critical situation in the family. The discomfited father-In-law must have thought, "why is my daughter-in-law so proud as not to agree to my wish, when many daughters-in-law of the other community live with their fathers-in-law?". But he forgot that his desire for his daughter-in-law was immoral according to the ethical rules of his own community. Also his son was old enough to claim exclusive rights of a husband over his wife. To revenge himself upon Balammal, he charged her with illicit intimacy with strangers. His expectation about the response of his son to his telegram was that she would be punished by him, but not killed. Having been brought up in the cultural environment of a particular caste, Siddhaiyan had imbibed the ethicai codes. Believing that she had transgressed those rules, he decided to kill her. He killed his father too, because his approach to his daughter-in-law was a transgression of the moral code of the jati.

In the jatis in which permissive custom prevailed, the modern youth revolt against it. There are a few communities who have traditionally followed the custom and are giving it up, because of the changes in social structure, consequent change in social values, education, enlightenment, and active opposition of the youth. When such is the situation even among jatis who practised this custom, how could youth allow it to be introduced into a community which held up faithfulness to the wedded husband as the highest virtue of a woman ?

Govindan Kolai Chindhu

1. Another ballad that has for its theme the illicit sexual relations of a young second wife of an old man with a young servant and the consequent slur on the good reputation of the family, which incited Govindan the elder son of the family to kill all the three, the wife, her paramour and the husband is known as

Govindan Kolai. The motive for the triple murder is the attempt to wipe off the stain on the honour of the family. The theme has a similarity in this particular aspect with Makkom ballad, though jealousy is not a component of the motive.

The author's name is mentioned in the booklet, 'Govindan Kolai' as Pichatoor M. S. C. Rajan alias Killiraja of Nellore. The story of the ballad is summarised below :

Lakshmanan, who was a resident of Journampalli, a village lying at a distance of seven miles from Tiruppattur in North Arcot District, had two wives, the second wife being much younger than himself. He was very fond of his young second wife. But she was carrying on an affair with a servant and farm-labourer by name Kuppan, who was young and handsome. Their clandestine love affair became well-known to the whole village, and the news finally reached the ears of Lakshmanan. He scolded his wife and dismissed Kuppan from service. The second wife Kulanthai Ammal could not live without meeting her paramour. She met him one evening and asked him to hire a bicycle and take her on the carrier to a far off place to make love to her. Their meetings became more and more frequent.

Govindan, Lakshmanan's elder brother's son came to know of this. He grew angry at the behaviour of Kulanthai, which brought infamy to their family. He went to his uncle Lakshmanan and asked him to prevent his wife carrying on an affair with Kuppan. The old man expressed his inability to control his wife. He spoke to his uncle's wife and pointed out to her how her intimacy with Kuppan was dragging the fair name of their family into the mud. As the eldest son of the eldest member of the family, he asked her so sever relations with him and stop meeting him. She pretended to be very much offended at his words. She told him that he was believing the slanderous rumours of jealous persons, about her. She declared that she would never bring dishonour to the family.

Kuppan came to know what Govindan had told Kulanthai and her husband. Struck with fear, he had been avoiding Kulanthai. But Kulanthai continued to meet him secretly and

Kuppan was emboldened by her *assurances. She asked him not* to mind the empty threats of a mere boy. The affair continued. Govindan complained to the elders of the village, who called Kuppan *and warned him. All* the efforts of Govindan to put an end to the clandestine meetings of Kulanthai and Kuppan proved futile. At last he decided to sacrifice three lives on the altar of family honour. He was lying in wait for Kuppan.

One day Kuppan entered Lakshmanan's house to *have his* pleasure on her. Kulanthai seeing Kuppan through the window signed to him to enter. He opened the door entered the house *and walked in. Govindan, who was watching* Kuppan entering the house, dashed into the house lighting his torch and slashed him with his sharp, large knife. Kulanthai, who came to the door to *receive* Kuppan, *also* received a cut with the knife on her neck. Two corpses lay there near the door. He went in seeking his uncle. Kulanthai's son, a young boy came there hearing the noise of fall of headless bodies. He raised a hue and cry. Govindan silenced him with a cut on the neck. He went in and saw his uncle sleeping on a cot. Just when he raised his knife *poised to* kill, Lakshmanan woke up and implored Govindan not to kill him. Govindan ignored his appeal and cut off his head.

He changed his blood-stained clothes, smeared his face with vibhuti (holy ash) took a kavadi (a scale-like device used in firewood shops to weigh), placed two heads on one pan and one head on the other pan and carried it to the police-station. Only the head-constable was present in the station. Ramanathan, the sub-inspector who had gone to Tiruppattur had not returned. Govindan was shut up in the police lockup. When Ramanathan returned, he was glad that Govindan had killed *the old impotent* dotard, the young wife-stealer and the faithless wife.

Govindan *was brought to trial before* the sessions judge who after a fair trial convicted him of murder and sentenced him to be hanged for having committed the murder of an innocent boy.

After a few months, Govindan was hanged in Vellore prison. His body was handed over to the next of kin. People of the

whole village attended the funeral and mourned his death. They spoke in admiration of his courage.

The folk-poet draws a moral from the story of Govindan.

Uncle's wife became immoral due to the influence of cinema. Kuppan died because of his illicit love. The husband died as a result of his foolishness and impotency. As illicit love sprouts, knife, spear and axe will be ready to root it out; Killiraja's pen will vie with instruments of death to nip illicit love in the bud.

Folk-judgement

Though law had to punish Govindan for the murder of the innocent boy, folk-judgment was that Govindan was a hero, who punished transgressors of folk-values of life. The root of sex-immorality is pointed out as incomparability in age in the case of Kulanthai Ammal and Lakshmanan.

Such marriages and such illicit love affairs are quite common among rich farmer's families. Illicit sex-affairs between close relatives without considering the degrees of marriageable kinship are tolerated. But if a woman member is involved in an affair with a servant of lower caste, it will be suppressed. Govindan is instrumental of putting in the role of nemesis against the offenders. In the ballad, the police-inspector is glad to know that Govindan has killed all those involved in the scandal, Lakshmanan Kulanthai Ammal and Kuppan. After Govindan's execution, his funeral is attened by admiring villagers, who praise his courage. The attitude of the folks to the deeds of Govindan is one of approbation and admiration. We shall see more of the values of folks on the basis of which they judge their heroes in the chapter on folk-heroes.

2. *Mangammal Kolai*

'Mangammal Kolai' is a ballad that has for its theme the murder of the daughter and suicide of the son who were victims of their mother's all-consuming passion and hence illicit love. The story is based upon a real incident that occurred a few years ago at Tiruppattur in North Arcot District.

I shall summarise the story told in the ballad, 'Mangammal Kolai'[21]. Manikkam chettiar married a young woman (many years younger than himself) named Mangammal. A son and a daughter were born to them, who were named Krishnan (son) and Pakkiam (daughter). The father died just when his daughter was fifteen years old and the son passed out of secondary school. After Manikkam's death, Mangammal married her daughter to Rengan of Pallipalayam and brought him to stay in their house in Tiruppattur. Krishnan was sant to Madras to study in Pachaiyappas College.

The young widow Mangammal was impaired by a torrential passion for her son-in-law. She made advances to him, which at first he rebuffed. But latter he succumbed to it and began to neglect his wedded wife. He left for his parental home for a brief stay.

Pakkiam wrote a letter to her brother Krishnan hinting to him their mother's conduct and asking him to come to Tiruppattur at once. In the meantime Mangammal wrote a letter to her son-in-law charging her own daughter with immoral conduct and inciting him to kill her. She wished to get rid of her own daughter, so that she could live without restraint in intimacy with Rengan, her son-in-law,

Rengan (son-in-law) received the letter and came to Tiruppattur resolved to kill his wife. He asked her to prepare for a journey and be ready the next morning to leave for his parental home for a brief stay. Without suspecting his evil intention, she followed him happily the next morning. He led her to a solitary spot where there was a well. He told her that he was thirsty and asked her to fetch water from the well. Just when she peeped into the well to see if there was water in it, he slashed off her head with a sword that he had kept hidden in his clothes. The head fell into the well and the trunk fell outside. He returned home.

Krishnan, who received his sister's letter, returned to Tiruppattur. He decided to go in disguise to his house to find out the truth of the news conveyed to him in his sister's letter. He disguised himself as a folk fortune-teller (Kotangi) and singing a

kotangi song in praise of village deities, he sat in front of his house. He sang that a woman and a man in that house wanted to live happily.

Hearing the song' Mangammal and Rengan came out to consult the fortune-teller their future. They brought old clothes to be presented to him as his fee for reading their fortune and invited him into the honse. Mangammal entered the house first, followed by her son-in-law. Krishnan entered last, closed and fastened the catch, brought out a butcher's knife and slashed off the head of Rengan. Before he could kill his mother, she escaped through the back door. Their pet dog recognised him and led him to the well, where he found the mutilated body of his sister. Overwhelmed with grief, he sawed off his own head with the sword.

Mangammal reported to the police that her son had murdered son-in-law. Two police men arrived at the spot of murder. The dog led them to the well, where the police found the bodies of the brother and sister. On searching the body of Krishnan, they found the letter Pakkiam had written to him. Then arrested Mangammal and brought her to trial on a charge of murder. The judge who tried her, sentenced her to twelve years' imprisonment.

The poet admires the courage of Krishnan and the cleverness of the dog.

Folk attitude to event

In this ballad also the incompatibility in age between the wife anu husband, who died when she was quite in her prime of youth is pointed out as the cause for the mother's illicit passion, which extenguished her love for her own daughter. Sex proved so strong that it could slifie natural maternal love.

Here we find social analysis pertaining to the marriage of a young woman to a rich merchant, who died when she was still in prime of life.

The actual murderer was her son, who would have killed her too, if she had not escaped in time. He wouid have commited

matricide, the most heinous of crimes according to Dharma Sastras and the most serious criminal offence according to the Indian Penal Code. Yet Krishnan would have committed such an offence, had his mother delayed to leave her house for a few minutes. Still the ballad would have admired courage.

The folk-judgment is in complete favour of Krishnan. It is in sympathy with his sister and tries to evoke our sympathy for her. It is mentorial in its attitude to Rengan who is a merely an instrument in the hand of the scheming Mangammal, whose illicit passion destroys her own offsprings. There is an indication that incompatibility in age between her and her hushand and the strong sexual urge in her are the cause of this calamity. Her husband, her sex-partner being dead, she is left with her flaming sex-passion to grapple with. She is unable to subdue it to her will or sublimate it. The flamme left un-controlled, consumes her whole family and herself.

Mangammal's problem of sex found expression after the death of her husband. This problem can arise in cases of women, who remain separated from husbands for a long period of time due to his absence on business trips. There are certain business jatis in Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Karnataka, the members of which used to be absent from home for many years doing business in Burma, Ceylon, Malayasia, or Singapore. The wives of such businessmen had the same psychological sexual problem as Mangammal's. There are many oral accounts of such women having had sexual intimacy with servants or close relatives and conceiving during the absence of the husbands. There was a liberal permissiveness in such communities among the members of which such relations did not bring about serious conflicts. The husbands were informed of the pregnancy of the wives in code language which they understood. On receiving the information the husbands returned and stayed at home for a few months to prevent wagging of tongues and legalise the child in the womb, as their own. This custom was widely prevalent among certain jatis, the members of which were engaged in foreign trade. Certain other jatis who do business in conflict far away from their native places also practice this custom on a smaller scale. Among a jati of businessmen doing business in cloth in Dharmapuri District in Tamil Nadu, this custom has been observed.[22] The members are absent from home on trips to Goa, Bombay and Calcutta for months, returning periodically

to stay at home for a month or two. They are sometimes hurriedly called home to stay with their wives, when they are not due to return, if their wives when they are not due to return, if their wives conceive during their absence. This laxness in sexual conduct in these jatis, sometimes tempts skirt-chasers to try to entice married women belonging to these Jatis. Ideals of chastity being very high and rules of chastity for women being very strict with the traditions of Pathini cult in Tamil Nadu, the members of the permissive communities do not desire their custom and practice to be known to other communities, do not spread the Pathini cult with great vigour and cause myths to be written about Pathinis from their own communities and also do not adopt well-known Pathinis into the fold of their community. This practice has now completely disappeared after their final return home from other countries, due to stringent laws against foreign immigrants.

The odium attached to such sexual relations outside wedlock has silenced the folk-poets to sing of such illicit love affairs in Tamil Nadu. But there is a song in Kannada with the theme of illicit sex-relation forced upon a wife by a rich young man using to his advantage the premissiveness that existed in a merchant community. The song is quite well-known as 'Sange-Bale Hadu' (the song about Sange and Bale). The story of the ballad is summarised below.[23]

In a village called Baila Hongal there lived a beautiful young woman, named Gangai, the wife of a travelling merchant. She was living alone in her house as her husband had left on a business tour. He was expected to return home only after six months. She went to a near by village to attend the festival of a local deity. A wealthy young man named Sange Gowda was swept off his feet by her charms. He asked his companion —Bale Gowda, who always helped him in all his amorous adventure to procure her for him. They followed her without her knowledge to her village and learned which her village was and where she lived. They returned to Baila Hongal the same night,

Sange Gowda charged Bale Gowda to procure Gengi as his mistress. Bale began his efforts to fulfil the 'desire of his friend and patron. On the pretext of going to and returning from the market in Baila Hongal, he made it a practice to

unload his merchandise on a raised platform on either side of the front door of her house and ask for something to eat. Taking pity on him Gengi fed him whenever he came. He stayed on the dais of her house.

Bale Gowda came to know of an old procuress, whom he asked to entice Gengi to accept Sange Gowda as her paramour. Theprocures approached Gengi with her proposal. Gengi refused to a ree. Then she threatened her saying that she would tell her relatives and send a letter to her husband about her entertaining Bale Gowda whenever he visited the village. Afraid of the consequences of such news spreading among her husband's brothers and finally reaching her husband, she agreed to the proposal of the procuress. Sange Gowda used to visit her often and stay with her. Her relations with Sange Gowda became known throughout the village. When her husband returned, he was told about her conduct during the period of his absence. He caught Sange Gowda red-handed and killed him. Learning the whole story from Gengi, his wife, he killed Bale and the old woman. He surrendered to the police. After a trial he was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment.

This story is different from other stories of the type in that woman does not take initiative in the affair. She actually rebuffs the advances of Sange Gowde. An experienced procuress has a role to play. She is won over by threats of excommunication and punishment by the husband. Bale Gowda is a typical boon-companion, who tricks Gengi to consent to receive Sange, who is a typical landlord seeking pleasure in wife-stealing. He takes advantage of the husband's absence, and perhaps of the moral laxity of the women in that community, who remain without the protection of the wedded spouses for many months together. These circumstances make Sange hopeful of success in his venture Gengi is just a victim of social circumstances and the trickery of rhe procuress.

Folk-judgement

The folk-poet metes out poetic justice to Bale, Sange and the procuress, but not to Gengi. Punishment to Gengi would completely upset the permissive code necessary for carrying on the material life of the community, for absence from home of the men-folk is inevitable for them to live in comfort.

Let us compare the thematic elements of the four stories just now related

	Siddhaiyan	Govindan	Sange-Bala	Mangammal
1.	'Sex problem' between father-in- and daughter-in-law	'Sex problem' between Govindan's uncle's second wife and a servant	Sex problem between a married woman remaining alone, and a stranger, while her husband is away-permissive community	Sex problem between mother-in-law and son-in-law Permissive communities
2.	Non-permissive community living among permissive communities	Non-permissive communities		Non-permissive community living among permissive community but only relatives between father-in-law and daughter-in-law permitted.
3.	Father-in-law breaks the code of morality of his community in imitation of father-In laws of neighbouring communities, where father-in-law daughter-in-law sex-relations are permissive	Joint family-The honour of the family at stake-Govindan who is the elder brother's son of Lakshmanan feels responsible to uphold the honour of the family	Sange Gowda takes hope from three circumstances. The permissiveness of the community, the separation of the husband and wife and lack of protection for	Mother-in-law, a widow breaks the code of morality of the community.

	Siddhaiyan	Govindan	Sange-Bala	Mangammal
4.	Rebuffed father-in-law incites son, with a false report cf immorality of his wife, to kill her	Efforts to put a stop to the relations between Kulanthai and Kuppan to receive the honour of the family-Decision to put an end to both	The efforts of Sange are successful-Gengi, afraid of dishonour and punishment, agrees to receive Sengi	The daughter is the aggrieved party, who informs her brother. Husband decides to kill only the offenders and not his wife, who was not a willing offender. Son decides to kill mother for her offence against norms of widow's faithfulness to her husband and for stealing her own daughter's husband.
5.	Believes father's report of immorality and decides to kill his wife.	Falling in his attempt to stop the affair by appealing to the offending woman and her husband, he decides to kill both.		
6.	Husband kills wife; son kills father-one on false report and the other on learning the truth from a dream.	Govindan kills three involved in causing dishonour and the fourth accidentally being present there.	Husband kills only those involved, because they are strangers; wife is exonerated.	Kills his brother-in-law. Wants to kill mother also, but she escapes. She is punished by law.

	Siddhaiyan	Govindan	Sange-Bala	Mangammal
7.	Commits suicide, learning the truth about his father's offence.	Kills four persons and takes the heads publicly to the police station and surrenders	Surrenders to the police, and is punished by law.	Truth is leaı ned by the police. Legal punishment
8.	'Folk verdict' Approves the conduct of Siddhaiyan, though he kills his wife believing on a false report.	Hails him as a hero in spite of the legal verdict of guilt.	The guilty persons are all those who seduced Gengi. The husband and wife are not guilty.	Both mother-in-law and son-in-law are guilty; but the son is not guilty,

Conclusion

The ballads deal only with murders and suicides that are socially significant. They do not concern themselves with ordinary killings for money or profit. Social analysis is an important element of the themes in these ballads too.

Two important types of ballads can be distinguished. I have dealt with one type of ballads in the foregoing pages — sex conflict in particular, social context in certain communities. The motive for killing is transgression of social attitude to morality, as has been pointed out in No. 3 of the table. The murdererss are not abnormal psychopathic maniacs, but normal persons aggrieved by offences against social morality and respectability.

The persons who have responsibility to prevent or stop offences against social morality are equally liable as the offenders themselves.

The ballads consider the murderers, who attempt to uphold social morality of family honour, as folk-heroes by pointing out the sympathy of the folks for those who are executed by judgments of the legal organs of justice. The folk-tribunal hands a different verdict from that of the legal tribunal.

The popularity of the murder-suicide type of ballads is mainly due to their sosial significance and because they approve of the courage with which the murderers try to uphold folk-coccepts of honour and morality.

Second type of ballads

The secoed type of ballads deal with the theme of killing the members of his own family, by a father unable to support them, due to changed circumstances in his fortunes. The circumstances are economic and not merely personal. I shall deal with this type of ballads presently, just citing two examples. All the second type of ballads without exception agree in the main thematic elements. Two examples will suffice to bring out their characteristics. Ten murders in the family of Angamuthu' is the title of a murder-suicide ballad. This ballad is based on a report that appeared in

'*Dhina Thanthi*' the day after the murder took place. The author s Thirumalaisamy a well-known folk-poet who has composed, many other ballads of this type of 'Kolai Chindhu'.[24]

The ballad begins with a list of persons who lost their lives in the hand-loom *crisis that gripped Coimbatore and* Salem Districts a few years ago. The list runs as follows.

1) Angamuthu Mudaliar (49 years)
2) Mariyayi Ammal (42 years)
3) Dharmalingam (male 18 years)
4) Durairaju (male 17 years)
5) Natarajan (male 15 years)
6) Lokanayaki (female 12 years)
7) Mohanambal (female 10 years)
8) Jothimani (female 7 years)
9) *Dhanalakshmi (female 4 years)*
10) Mohanasundaram (male 2 years)

A baby in the womb of Mariyayi was extracted during post-mortem of the mother's body.

The poet then begins to *narrate* the tragic circumstances that led to the murder of his wife and children and his own suicide.

The folk-poet expresses his sympathy for Angamuthu Mudaliar in the following words :

> *"Though he had many relatives and though he was skilled in his* craft, the coupon system of sale of yarn threw him into deep debt and took his life."

Angamuthu was a skilled printer of cloth. Finding that he could not earn enough to make both ends meet, he left for Bombay to seek better employment. He joined a cloth printing shop and worked there for eight years. During the eight years he won the good-will *and friendship* of his co-workers by dint of his character. He returned to Erode and started his own printing shop. He undertook dying and printing work, from which he earned good money and became a prosperous merchant.

He had a wife and eight children, whose names were listed earlier. He owned 300 looms and the saris woven on them were sent in parcels to the whole district of Coimbatore and beyond to Salem, Thanjavur and Andhra Pradesh.

Fortune that had smiled on him began to turn her back. The general crisis of the handloom industry was felt in his own trade. Loss after loss came crowding in. He borrowed money from banks. Then he had to sell his house, lands, gold ornaments and everything that could be exchanged for cash. He could not pay back the loans he had borrowed from banks and private money-lenders. The interests was mounting to a huge amount. The creditors brought court action against him. They attached his property that was left with him after selling a part of it for repaying the loans. Friends who had received help from him during the days of his prosperity, now refused to help him. He could see no way of deliverance from the clutches of his creditors. He decided to put an end to the lives of all the members of his family and finally his own.

He sold his watch, the only valuable that he possessed and bought sweets for his children. He distributed a rupee each to the children and asked to go to a cinema house and see a film. After they had left, he bought fruits and coconut to offer to his family deity and returned home. He wrote letters to his brothers and true friends, informing them of his plan to escape the miseries of the world. He hid them behind the picture of his favourite deity in the puja-room.

The children returned after the film show was over. He had informed his wife about what he had proposed to do that night. She agreed whole-heartedly with his decision. He kept ready the sweet-offering to Murugan called Panchamirtham, mixed with poison. His wife and the children ate it. They fell into a swoon and died. He lifted the bodies one by one carried them to the puja-room and laid them in a row before the picture of Murugan. He smeared sandal paste and kumkum on the foreheads of the bodies He prayed to his favourite deity to accept nine lives as sacrifice and bless their souls. Then he drank a poisionous potion and fell dead.

Next morning the tragic news spread throughout Erode. His brothers and relatives arrived grief-stricken. The Police arrived last and made a search. They found Angamuthu's letters lying hidden behind a picture hanging on the wall of the puja-room. They called in a group of panchayatdars, who returned a verdict of suicide. The corpses were carried in the police lorry to the burial ground, where they were buried in a common ground. They were together in the joys and sorrows of life and they were together in death.

This ballad deals with a tragic incident caused by the general economic crises of which the crisis in the hand-loom industry was a part. The rise and fall of the fortunes of a printer's family is the theme of the ballad. When the whole sector of textile industry was caught in the vortex of the general economic crises on a world-scale, the individual prosperous trader dealing in hand-loom goods could not escape destruction in the whirl wind that uprooted and destroyed many social classes dependant upon the Indian textile industry for their trade and living. The printer, who passed many vicissitudes in his life to rise to the position of a prosperous trader, was ruined, caught in the tornado of the economic crisis. His crisis in his private life was related to the general economic crisis over which he or his likes or for that matter any individual or class of individuals had any control. Their consciousness could not comprehend the forces that brought ruin to their families. Being unable to fight the monster of man's own creation, he succumbed to the crisis and decided to end his own life and the lives of his dependants. The inadequacy of social consciousness to comprehend social reality is well-brought out in the ballad in the soliloquy of the hero of the ballad.

"I am left alone after I have killed my wife and my eight children. I have no desire to live in my tracherous mother-land which cannot feed its children. I shall now die emptying a cup of poison". He prostrated before the picture of Murugan, drank a draught of a poisonous liquid and fell dead.

The mental conflict between his desire to live and protect his family and his inability to escape from the consequences of the economic crisis, was solved by him and many others like him by

recourse to murder of those whom he loved and also suicide. No other solution could occur to men of his status, whose social consciousness did not rise above the consciousness of the middle merchant class, who could not comprehend the depth of the great crisis into which they were sucked in.

Another ballad tells the story of a worker, who with a wife and six children, could not meet both ends meet, because of his expensive pastimes and finally commits murder and suicide to escape from his creditors.[28]

There lived in Kondithope in Madras a worker named Kothandaraman. He was employed in the Railway Loco-shop in Perambur. He was much believed and respected by his follow-workers for his honesty and sincere nature. He was a good son and a good husband. Love bound his family into a happy home.

His wife Sakuntala bore him six children. Expenses for his large family drove him to borrow money from professional money-lenders. Unable to repay it from his wages, he thought of coming by huge fortune through raffles and gambling in horse-race. So he began to go to gambling dens and to Guindy. Fortune frowned on him and he began to lose heavily. He borrowed money and wasted it in gambling, till finally to had to part with his entire wages on wage-days to his creditors.

On a wage-day he was returning home with his wage-packet. The creditors surrounded him and relieved him of the entire wage for a month for their interest, He was walking home empty-handed. He fancied his wife and children expecting his return with little presents and sweetmeats and a smile on his face; his wife wou'd be waiting for him to bring provisions for the month How could they manage to eat and live for thirty days when the next wage-packet was due ? He saw no hope of ever paying off his loans and obtaining deliverance from his creditors. He therefore decided to kill himself and all the members of the family. Then a call came from within himself inviting him to the shrine of Murugan at Thiruthani.

He bought tickets to Thiruthani and went with his wife and children to the famous shrine. He told his wife of his plan to kill himself and the whole family by throwing them and himself into the tank before the temple. She was shocked to learn from him his horrid plan of mass murder and suicide. She could not believe such a loving father could think of such a cruel thought to get rid of his wife and children. Yet his miserable life had transformed a loving husband and father into a heartless homicide. She would also see no way out of the meshes of loans they had to repay, with her consent, he bound them all with his wife's saree and led them into deep water. They were all drowned. The next morning people found the bodies floating in the tank. Thousands of worshippers, who had arrived for a festival of the temple, saw the bodies and shed tears.

Ballads of the same theme are in wide circulation in Madras city and neighbouring industrial areas.

Due to the rise in cost living during the last decade, the workers with large family found it impossible to maintain their families. They had recourse to short-cut methods of earning money such as racing, raffles and gambling. They invariably failed to come by luck and got into debt. The heartless money-lenders sucked their blood and left them skin and bone without any hope of survival. Their whole earnings were appropriated by the money-lenders on the payment day. Being unable to support the family, they decided to disband it by death.

The causes for such murders and suicide are clearly indicated in the ballads as large family, poor wages and desire to come by riches relying on a faith in luck. They believed that by their own individual efforts they could solve their problems.

On the other hand the ballads show that it was impossible to achieve freedom from penury by workers' individual efforts. It was not an individual problem, but a class-problem. But the worker-characters in the ballads are not socially conscious. Individual attempts to solve one's problems, never lead to success.

This leads the worker to reject the methods of trying individual luck, believing in the turn of fortune by fate and become socially conscious. When the workers merge their individual conciousness into the *class-consciousness of the worker's collective*, they are inspired by the success of workers, who fight united struggles in their own cities and elsewhere. Then they realise that ndividual problems can be solved only by collective efforts. The experience of class-struggles develops in the workers a consciousness of a higher type. In India the rise of social consciousness emerged half of century ago and engulfed the whole class of workers who were drawn into different national trade-union collectives. This new consciousness made them optimistic and inspired them to fight the consequences of ecnomic crisis with confidence. They were prepared to meet oppression and violence from the employers who use the *organs of law and the state*. *Deaths due to police* firing only inspired the workers to gather in larger numbers and strengthen themselves to struggle against exploitation and end it.

I have been able to collect only one ballad about deaths due to police firing on workers, in which the folk-attitude to worker's struggles and death in struggles is indicated.

The ballad deals with the theme of the *harbour-worker's* strike of 1958 in which six lives were lost by police firing on striking workers. This is a new type of Kolai Chindu entitled 'Anyaya Chindu' *(song of unjust killing)*.

The ballad describes the miserable living conditions of the workers in Madras during the different years of 1953 to 1958, when cost of living soared high, but the wages remained stationary. Agricultural productions touched a low level and grain was in short supply. Price of rice went up sky-rocketing. A measure of rice was sold for a rupee, twice the price at which it was obtained ten years ago. All the necessities of life became *expensive*. The house-rent rose fourfold. The common misery and suffering of the harbour-workers united them in their union. The union demanded an increase in wages and *dearness allowance*. *The management* of the harbour rejected the demands of the workers. The union decided to issue a notice that the workers would go on strike.

On June 15th, 1958, workers in the harbours of Bombay Calcutta and Madras went on strike. Newspapers carried the news of the strike and slanderous articles of the capitalists on workers. The labour-agents lavished money to recruit blacklegs. The police threatened dire consequences on the strikers. The workers gathered before the gates of the harbours and demonstrated for their demands, shouting slogans They organised picket-lines and prevented blacklegs from entering the harbour. They lay before lorries bringing in the police and black legs.

The wireless van of the police sent broadcast messages to Delhi. The propaganda vans warned the workers through loudspeakers to disperse. The picket-line stood firm like a stonewall.

The police went into the attack. They fired tear gas shells. They began a *lathi*-charge. The workers dispersed only to reassemble in greater strength. Just then antisocial elements exploited the confusion prevailing there to loot shops and houses. Mr. Arul the Police Commissioner assisted by Messrs. Chenthamarai and Assistant Commissioners of Police, directed his efforts to apprehend the miscreants.

The police personel was called in to protect the properties of the Harbour Trust. The Union leaders Messrs S. S. Anthony Pillai and A. S. K. Iyengar met the Chairman of the Port Trust. They discussed the situation speaking in English. While the discussion was going on, lorry loads of blacklegs were brought to the gate and the police officers asked the workers in the picket-lines to disperse in order to make way for the workers, who were ready to go in and begin work. But the workers refused to be cowed down by threats. They stood their ground in the picket-line. The antisocial elements throw brickbats and stones at the steel-helmeted policemen. Slogans were shouted: "Kill the blacklegs, kill the policemen". Hell was let loose. There reigned utter confusion for a few minutes. In the pell-mell of chaos a few persons were trodden to death underfoot. The police charged the crowd with lathis. A few fell dead under the blows on the heads. The police were ordered to fire into the crowd. The crowd dispersed leaving the dead near the gate. The ballad then goes on to identify the dead with details

of next of kin. Out of the six who died, only four were named — 1, Mukhavalagan 2. Gopal 3. Vedachalam 4. Natarajan. Two more were identified by the relatives. The total number of casualties was eight.

A few of them left widows with children. A few others left their old parents without anyone to support them. One had a sister to be married off. Father, mother, wife sister and son lamented for the departed. Their bodies were carried in procession led by the Union leaders, Messrs. S. S. Anthony Pillai and A. S. K. tyengar. Ten thousand workers attended the funeral procession with tears and fire of determination to continue the struggle till victory was won. The toll of the dead was eight and wounded 156. The D. M. K. leader Mrs. Sathiavanimuthu attended the funeral.

After discussions between union leaders and the harbour-management at Delhi before Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, terms of compromise were agreed to. The workers returned to work on 18th June 1958, more united and confident of their strength than ever before.

The industrialisation of the country began with the laying of rail-roads a hundred years ago in the Dravidian region. This led to the emergence of industries and growth of new industrial cities. The rural folk migrated tol industrial towns to become industrial workers. The change in conditions of life from rural agricultural employment to industrial employment has transformed their cultural life. The closed rural society has been broken up by the expansion of a regional and later a national market. These changes, due to industrialisation, ushered in cultural changes in the newly formed working class. The social conciousness of the rural folks who migrated to find employment in industry, transport and commerce, not only transformed the social relations. but also the culture of the rural working folk. Still is was *not destruction of folk-culture*, but its development by acquirement of new cultural elements and replacement by them of old values that impeded industrial and cultural progress. In India town and village, agriculture and industry have close reaction upon each other, causing an intermingling of the new and the old in the cultural stream of the people. A

study of this aspect of cultural development has not yet been undertaken by scholars. American folk-scholars have just turned their attention to the transformation and development of folk-culture by the impact of industrialisation in their country. They have undertaken recently studies of migration of folks and labour-lore.

The new mode of life of our working folk is producing new cultural materials, because of the new social relations being established among individuals and groups. That is why the traditional ballad forms are acquiring new content, such as firing on workers, the ruination of small industries and the sufferings of railway workers. Their consciousness is rising to higher levels.

No work of collection has been attempted in the field of labour lore. If a vigorous attempt is made to collect folklore of the workers in different industries, a new dimension will be added to the conceptual image of Indian folklore.

Due to revolutionary changes in the mode of material life of our rural folks, their culture is also undergoing changes at a rapad pace. The dominant trend of these changes is towards a dynamic movement for the formation of a national folk-culture moving closer to an Indian national culture. Folk-culture has to be studied in its historical perspective, as it emerges out of its rural isolation. This is due to the effects of national policies of industrialisation and modernisation of agriculture, spread of education in rural areas and the development of national consciousness through the spread of mass media to villages.

Footnotes to the Chapter on ballads of Suicide and Murder

1) Marutham is the land area where wet crops grow. But in the oral versions the crops grown are mentioned as kambu and kelvaragu.

2) In the oral versions personae live in a village. But here they live in Madurai.

3) Induvani is the name of the queen, whose daughter is Nallathangal. The names of the father and mother of Nallathangal are not given in these versions.

4) Tapas for children is not found in the oral version.

5) King of Kasi is the bridegroom of Nallathangal The transformation of peasant character into royal characters is complete with the mention of Ramalingam and Induvani as king and queen, and of the King of Kasi as the husband of Nallathangal.

6) The list of articles of dowry betrays the peasant origion of the characters.

7) Peasant's superstitions and folk-beliefs.

8) The distance between Kasi and Madurai is too much to be covered in a day or two by walk.

9) The event is not mentioned in the oral versions

10) Nallathangal is capable of magical feats.

11) Kelvaragu is corn grown in dry land. It contradicts the description of the land as marutham.

12) Avara has totemic significance for the Kammavar people

13) The description is hyperbolic; the omens refer to the fall and death of an elephant.

14) Revenge by means of a stratagem is a folk-formula in ballads.

15) Nellathangal's husband's fields yielded a harvest after prolohged famine. As it is mentioned as a harvest of kambu, a dry crop, it reveals the peasant origin of her husband.

16) It is a custom current among the folks to cement the line of division between the door and the door frame before going on a trip even for a few days.

17) K. K. N. Kurup. The Theyyams of Keraia
Makkom Bhagavati

18) Kolai Chindu —in general circulation in North Tamil Nadu — Salem and Dharmapuri Districts, also in Coimbatore, North Arcot and Madras Districts.

19) Indian Antiquary Vol. III January 1874 p.p. 332

20) Tamilar Nattuppadalkal — Ed. N. Vanamamalai pp. 178

21) Author unknown — Publisher K. A. Madurai Mudaliar, Shanmughananda Book Depot, Park Town, Madras-3

22) Field observations of S. Varadharajan in Dharmapuri District

23) Information supplied by Dr. Kalpurgi, Reader in Kannada, Karnatak University. There is a play of the title Sange Bale in Kanada.

24) Thirumalaiswamy, Shanmugananda Book Depot, Madras 3

25) Pichatoor M. S. C. Rajan (Killiraja)

26) Author unknown — Publisher S. T. Manikka Naicker, 139, Choolai High Road, Madras 1

CONCLUSION

A conclusion at the end of the thesis may appear redundent, since every chapter in this thesis contains a few conclusions. A general theoretical frame-work evolves from the logical inferences in each chapter. I shall try to show the connections between particulars and the universal in this chapter.

In the introduction to the thesis, I have analysed the concepts in folklore studies prevalent in the new world and the old. These concepts have emerged out of folk-life in different countries. Folk-life changes with transformations in the course of history of every country. It is not static, but dynamic. These changes cause disappearance of certain types of folklore and the emergence of new types. An understanding of the death of the old and the birth and development of the new involves an understanding of the dialectical struggle between the two. The death of the old is not complete disappearance of the old, but continuation of its existence as important aspects in the new living tradition. The study of these transformations takes us outside the boundaries of strict folk-studies. Anthropology, linguistics, history and other social sciences provide data and explanation of changing folklore. Hence folklore is adopting a multi-discipilnary methodology to understand its own data. Acceptance of methodology comprehensively utilising all progressive methods in social sciences and broad

conceptual frame-work as world outlook, bids good for the future studies in International folklore with better understanding and sympathy for the folks. It is therefore important to bring all knowledge of the past in history. anthopology, linguistics and literature to understand the present in which social life is undergoing changes at amazing momentum. I have as far as possible utilised data from various social sciences to interpret folklore and made use of the comparative method to draw conclusions. I have made a few remarks on the theory of *Sanskritisation* in the chapters on models of heroes and shown that the very broad definition of 'Sanskritisation' leads to grotesque errors and that the theory is inapplicable to a very large area of folklore. I have also tried to set boundaries to the term 'folks' for which there were twenty-one definitions (in dictionaries of folklore). I have also attempted to show the relation between national and international folklore basing my arguments on transitory difference in social life in the course of the history of nations, their unequal development (as particular trends) and the struggle of humanity towards happiness as a universal trend.

In so far as the 'Folks' constitute the majority of the Tamil people (unlike in America and the Western Countries), it is necessary for the folklore scholar to assume an attitude of sympathy towards the lore they create. They are the cultural creations of the illiterate working people. Their culture is firmly related to labour. We have to study folklore not only to understand the lore, but also the folks who created it. To comprehend the essence of the folk-life we have to set them in their social environments and understand their relations with the elite groups. I have done this wherever possible. I have compared the folk-consciousness (meaning by the terms folk-belifs, folk-ways, folk-values, folk-judgments) with the consciousness of the elite. I have passed studied comments on elite values wherever they assumes an opposite attitude to that of the folks. For example, in the Chapter on the 'Concept of the Models of Heroes' I have compared the value-patterns of the Raglan-Campbell-Hahn concepts with those of the local hero and regional hero and national hero of folk-ballads.

Anthropological data reveal the socio-historical conditions of the folks much more directly than literary data. I have therefore

drawn profusely from knowledge of modern anthropology. Folk culture is being changed by the influence of mass media like the cinema and the radio. Still a pure form of folk-culture exists as local traditions. A part of folk-culture is being transformed by the influence of elite cultural traditions into regional or national culture Ritual practices survive at the lower levels of folk-culture. I have tried to trace them wherever possible. These practices are self-revealing.

Ballads and songs have social roots. I have attempted to relate the ballads and songs to their social base. I have dealt with ritual practices and beliefs underlying them in more than one chapter. The thesis may be considered to draw upon knowledge gathered by two important social sciences, anthropology and sociology.

An important value system of the folks is dealt with in this thesis. More than half the total pages of the thesis covers 'the models of heroes' and 'historical ballads'. I have accepted the Raglan type of hero as the classical hero, but not as the universal type. They are drawn from purely literary sources, which reflect the values and interests of the elite groups. The folk-hero is of a different type and is the bearer of different values reflecting different interests. He is self-negativing, and performs heroic feats to serve his class and lays down his life in the service of his class. If the folk-hero struggles against the elite and their interests, the elite literature narrating his exploits are either distorted or ignored. There are attempts to change their birth, substituting high-caste birth for low-caste origin. This is done to blunt the edge of social protest. This is called birth substitution by my friend and pupil stuart Blackburn of California University. After the analysis of a few ballads, I have constructed three models of folk-heros the local hero, the regional hero and the national hero. The attitude of the folks to history is dealt with in the Chapter on historical Ballads. Their outlook on historiccal events and personages is elicited from historical ballads. The historiography of the folks and the elite are antipodal.

I have supplied fresh material from Tamil and Dravidian folklore to strengthen the theory of magic propounded by

J. G. Frazer, This could be found in the Chapter 'Rain in Folklore' and women in Folklore'. The role of magic in srtengthening confidence has been pointed out. With advancement of culture and material wealth in society, magic is not exclusively invoked. Human will liberates itself from the shackles of magic.

In the chapter on 'woman and Fertility' the ritual and the faith underlying it has been presented to strengthen the universal belief in the mutual dependence of women and earth in procreative activity. A folk-song describing a fertility ritual and a report of an anthropologist about fertility ritual are presented to supplement the traditional view on fertility. I have attempted to show how religious faith and vegetarianism have modified the old ritual practices of fertility.

The Chapter on Suicide and Murder Ballads' enlarges on the goneral theme of the folks' precarious identity in a social setting dominated by the elite. Suicide and murder, far from being a result of psychosis, became in the eyes of the folks a natural response to the miserable living conditions of the folks. It is in these ballads, the folk reveal their true folk-attitude to death. This attitude results from their environment over which they have no control and which they are unable to comprehend completely. Sheer failure to cope with external conditions is for the majority of folks a near enough possibility. Commiseration with man, who is driven by poverty to kill himself and his entire family, stirs up our anger against social conditions, which make possible the tragic end of people. The ballads follow a pattern, which in turn follow a living folk-tradition.

The ballads consider the murderers, who attempt to uphold social morality or family honour as folk-heroes, by pointing out the sympathy of the folks for those who are executed by judgments of legal organs of justice. The folk-tribunal hands a different verdict from that of the legal tribunal.

I have consistently tried to point out the relation between beliefs, concepts, values and emotions of the folks to their living conditions, which rest on the socio-economic base of society at a particular point of historical time. Wherever possible particulars are related universals.

A scholarly reader might have discovered that the methodology of my research is both comparative and dialectical. I have worked only on a few important aspects of Tamil folklore and wish to have extended my area of research; but the limited time for the submission of the thesis (one year) has restricted the area of my study. Anyhow I feel satisfied that, in the limited areas of my study, I have made a satisfactory analysis and come to valid and true conclusions. I codsider my work embodied in the Chapters 'Models of Hero' and 'Historical Ballads' as important.

ERRATA

P. No.	L. No.	ERROR	CORRECTION
1	9	difinitions	definitions
2	1	teis	this
5	1	creations of of	creations of
5	26	sociolist	socialist
6	27	Kurchatav	Kurchatov
10	30	desting	destiny
12	2	enlogising	eulogising
12	8	life the	life of the
13	8	milien	milieu
13	12	Strauus	Strauss
14	24	in	is
14	30	various	variant
15	10	balled	ballad
17	17	contempoarenity	contemporaneity
21	12	Moss	Mass
21	16	Pensylvania	Pennsylvania
23	22	voer	over
25	1	role	roles
26	26	oll	oil
27	14	pointed	printed
27	17	in-vitable	inevitable
28	19	tile	till
29	31	ernel	kernel
30	7	aruel	gruel
30	29	distribution	distribution
30	31	parennial	perennial
32	3	no	do
32	13	of of lamentation	of lamentation
35	10	The effigy is stopped in its persons who dominate the village	*delete*
38	11	thale ammeda	thale (Kannada)
39	4	imminate	inanimate
39	26	pantomine	pantomime
39	27	them	then
40	2	retile	*delete*
40	9	appea	appeal
40	12	chiidren	children
43	9	In	in
44	30	he	the
45	3	Hense	Hence
51	27	chapert	chapter

52	26	nearly	dearly
54	3	mannure	manure
63	29	dominent	dominant
66	4	Foodnotes	Footnotes
70	5	dominent	dominant
70	21	to	too
74	12	piaces	places
74	19	otten	often
77	31	dring	drink
78	20	snn	son
78	28	Is	is
79	27	regi	ragi
80	14	or	of
80	29	guietly	quietly
82	21	coparceners	copartners
85	4	attitude to to	attitude to
85	14	pennchati	penchati
86	31	unfeeling	unfailing
86	32	idulity	fidelity
86	35	talking	taking
96	28	drawn	draws
102	13	pe	be
108	4	besed	based
109	4	Marxiest	Marxist
110	4	balled	ballad
110	20	Elrram	Erran
115	15	heerb of ereaches	before he reaches
117	3	enseaved	enslaved
120	32	Integrated	integrated
125	20	wice	twice
128	26	milai	milieu
131	16	eplc	epic
131	23	oblects	objects
133	13	faithfulld	faithfully
136	13	lefts	left
137	31	csore	score
138	14	imaga	image
139	9	tran ragress	transgress
140	28	septem	system
141	34	dcquirement	acquirement
142	17	makcs	makes
150	8	avators	avatar
151	1	archanic	archaic

152	27	linquistic	linguistic
154	3	Chinnatharui	Chinnathurai
161	35	boarns	boars
162	31	nn	an
170	8	thə	the
172	34	Boarn	Born
173	12	attltude	attitude
173	14	treachary	treachery
175	24	atways	always
185	28	hige	high
192	6	orlginal	original
198	4	Veadimin Propp	Veadmire Popp
198	27	Lewis Stracens	Lewis Strauss
202	9	lyer	Iver
206	12	euents	events
206	25	Maqueean	Maqueen
206	28	as oral	*delete*
207	27	lyer	Iver
214	13	rulers were	rulers
214	19	migrated South	migrated to the south
221	14	pandiamma	Pandi maa
227	15	husband	husband in
223	27	disclain	disdain
225	20	Bramin	Brahmin
229	10	or	of
232	9	Pull	Puli
234	2	investerate	inveterate
234	8	add	and
234	30	is counterposed	*delete*
239	19	Thandavaroyan	Thandavarayan
239	20	"	"
239	24	"	"
240	11	cnronologically	chronologically
240	28	iooted	looted
240	31	peasantury	peasantry
249	6	liherty	liberty
251	20	Mark	Marx
252	1	pattu	pallu
252	6	"	"
253	27	Kegah	Kegan
255	10	to	*delete*
260	27	Sha	she
263	30	arown	crown

264	5	teh	the
267	11	versaion	venison
271	35	charity	chastity
274	8	stotus	status
281	30	stoty	story
282	31	and	end
282	34	law	laws
283	14	at place	at a place
283	14	and	*delete*
284	16	athiliation	affiliation
285	21	Matrilineal	Matrilocal
287	28	agitatiors	agitators
288	18	happy	happily
289	10	her that	*delete*
290	7	permittance	permission
290	27	of course	of course be
292	7	in law led to a critical situation in the family	*delete*
292	29	could	could the
293	29	so	to
295	20	of	in
298	5	admired	admired his
299	2	(their)	their
299	3-4	when....wives	*delete*
299	27	Gangai	Gangi
299	39	frlend	friend
300	7	procures	procuress
300	8	eree	agree
301	14	In	in
302	3	cf	of
304	23	coocepts	concepts
304	26	secoed	second
309	17	n ighbouring	neighbouring
310	10	half of	half a
311	30	throw	threw
312	10	tyengar	Iyengar
312	23	tol	to
312	32	is	it
313	17	raped	rapid
314	22	prolohged	prolonged
316	1	redundent	redundant
318	33	historiocal	historical

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